JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1986 $2.50

Sierra Life

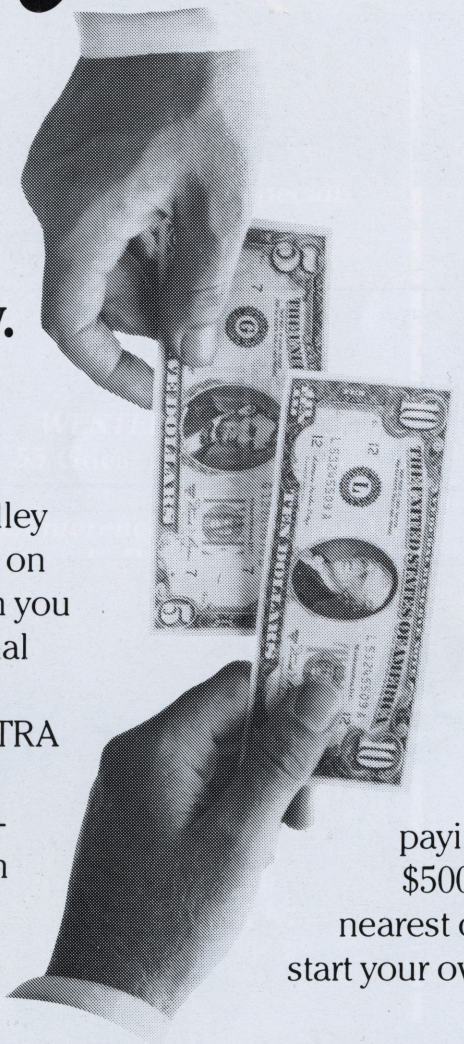
THE MAGAZINE OF THE HIGH SIERRA

The Real Dave McCoy • Blue Grouse • Vern Clevenger
Bard & Carter's Redline • Acid Rain • Water and Power
The Race to Climb Mt. Whitney • Ansel Adams • Mark Twain

Winter creek, Conway Summit

Tim Snyder photo

Five will get you Ten!



Double your money. No risk. No stress. No kidding!

Certificates of deposit at Valley Federal give a risk-free return on your investment that can earn you *more than double* your original deposit.

And Valley Federal pays EXTRA interest on deposits from $25,000 on–a bonus that doubles on $50,000 or more. With both bonus and regular high rates locked in for the entire term, regardless of length. All guaranteed safe, with FSLIC insurance to $100,000.

Your Deposit	After 7½ Years*
$ 5,000.	$ 10,185.
$10,000.	$ 20,370.
$25,000.	$ 51,300.
$50,000.	$103,354.

Call 800-272-3932

NOW, on the double, for all the current high rates Valley Federal's paying on certificates–from $500 on up. Or stop by your nearest office to find out how to start your own double-your-money certificate program.

Valley Federal Savings

Bishop: 400 North Main St.
Manager: John Hall (619) 873-4246.

*Calculations based on 9.60%, rate current as of 10/27/85, for 5 to 10 year certificates of deposit with bonus for deposits of $25,000 or more of .1%, for $50,000 or more .2%. Substantial penalty for early withdrawal of principal. Subject to change without notice.

Funds insured to $100,000 · Assets over $2½ billion. FSLIC

June Lake Motel and Cabins

"Year Round Resort - in the Beautiful Sierras"

P.O. Box 98, June Lake, CA. 93529
Phone: (619) 648-7547

Indoor Jacuzzi & Sauna - 19 Large Rooms - Cable Color TVs -
In-room Coffee - Kitchens Available - 1 Bedroom -
2 Bedroom Cabin with Fireplace & Kitchen
3 Bedroom Condo
11 miles from Lee Vining - Eastern Gateway to Yosemite

Letters to the Editor

I get tremendous joy from reading every issue of Sierra Life from cover to cover. Thank you so very much for all that makes publication of your first rate magazine possible. Thank you for sharing your talents, time, money, and dedication.

Publishing a magazine of this character with such a small staff and in such a sparsely populated area is to me a mind boggling accomplishment. Sierra Life is a great asset to the Eastern Sierra. Few places have such a fine publication, even places with many, many times the population and financial support.

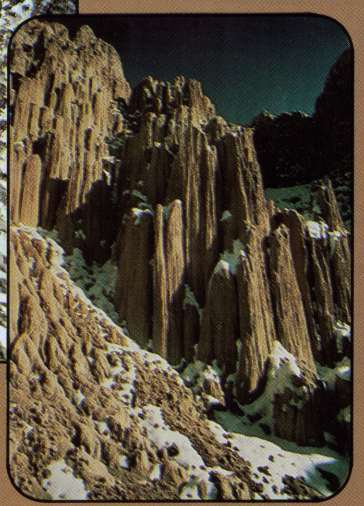
Stan Ross
Bishop, CA

Sierra Life is a beautiful magazine. The covers, paintings, photos are exquisite. It brings peace to my soul.

May Smith
Alturas, CA

TRAVELODGE®

10% Off Our Regular Rack Rate



Tahoe City
455 No. Lake Blvd.
(916) 583-3766

South Lake Tahoe
3489 US-50 at Bijou Ctr.
(916) 544-5266

Casino
4003 US-50 at Stateline
(916) 541-5000

Stateline
4011 US-50 at Stateline
(916) 544-6000

Carson City, NV
1400 N. Carson St.
(702) 882-3446

Fallon
70 E. Williams Ave.
(702) 423-2194

Reno
655 W. 4th St.
(702) 329-3451

Call Direct or Toll Free and ask for our Sierra Life Discount:

(800) 255-3050

Offer expires June 30,1986

Editor's Corner

CRITICS

The trade of critic in literature, music and the drama, is the most degraded of all trades.

Mark Twain

There must be no group among professional writers more maligned than critics. They are condemned by readers who disagree with them, and reviled by those they review. That's not hard to understand, considering that a critic's word can sometimes dispatch a production which cost years of work or millions of dollars to overnight oblivion.

I don't think critics are all bad. For one thing, they sometimes write some pretty funny things. Dorothy Parker once wrote of a Katherine Hepburn stage performance, "She runs the gamut of emotions all the way from A to B." A drama critic covering another performance contributed the line, "He played the King as if he were about to play the Ace."

Such shockers are a critic's life's blood, and granted, those who write reviews professionally are a pretty cynical lot. No doubt, their cynicism is produced in part by the verbal abuse for which they are regularly the target. Or more than verbal in the case of Ernest Hemingway, who once punched Max Eastman for writing a negative review of one of his books. Eastman, to his credit, punched him back.

Professional critics actually perform a variety of important functions in the artistic infrastructure. They provide a new standard from which to misjudge a work's value. They encourage favored artists, and encourage others to find new professions. They not only keep track of the dozens of new productions which pop up each year, but they tell us what's wrong with all of them. Contributions like that are hard to ignore.

Marty Forstenzer

Best Western

AAA

BISHOP HOLIDAY SPA LODGE
Direct-Dial Phones
Spa Pool/Color TV
Ask about our special, seasonal rates!
1025 N. Main Street
Bishop, CA 93514
(619) 873-3543

WESTERNER MOTEL
55 Guest Rooms & Suites
Pool
Conference Facilities for 45
In-Room Coffee
150 Elm Street
Bishop, CA 93514
(619) 873-3564

LAKE VIEW LODGE
In-Room Coffee
30 Main Street
P.O. Box 345
Lee Vining, CA 93541
(619) 647-6543

RUBY INN
In-Room Coffee
Pets OK
Excellent Fishing Nearby
Across from County Courthouse on U.S. Hwy. 395
Bridgeport, CA 93517
(619) 932-7241

HI—DESERT INN
Color TV / Pool
In-Room Movies
Senior Citizen Discount
Restaurant adjacent
Hwy 6 & 95, center of town
P.O. Box 35
Tonopah, NV 89049
(702) 482-3511

FRONTIER MOTEL
Direct-Dial Phones
Color TV/Heated Pool
In-Room Coffee
1008 S. Main Street
Lone Pine, CA 93545
(619) 876-5571

Call Toll Free for Reservations

(800) 528-1234

WORLDWIDE LODGING

The Video Place

At the entrance of the Bishop Theatre on Main St.
A SELECTION OF OVER 2,000 Movies
873-3576
MOVIES • VIDEO MACHINES • CAMERA RENTALS

For Fashionable Men and Women
Don's FASHIONS
"In The CENTER Of Town"
Name Brands From Fun to Classics
275 North Main St., Bishop, CA 93514 (619) 873-3939

25 K GROOMED TRACK
BEGINNER TO EXPERT

RUSTIC SECLUDED CABINS
LODGE & FAMILY-STYLE DINING
SKI RENTALS
VIDEO LESSONS
GUIDED TOURS
"LEARN-TO-SKI WEEKS"

INQUIRE ABOUT OUR BACKCOUNTRY HUT SYSTEM

CALL FOR FREE BROCHURE:
(619) 935 4464

EDITORIAL

Publisher Sandie Pramann

Editor Marty Forstenzer
Sports Editor Blake Jones
Wildlife Editor Mike McWherter
Outdoor Editor Hank Levine
Environment Editor Marv Collins
Contributing Editors Doug Robinson, Meredith Nelson, Martha Voght

ART & PHOTOGRAPHY

Art Director Janice Kabala
Photographers Gordon Wiltsie, John Stow

PRODUCTION

Manager Earl Robinson

ADVERTISING

Mike Martell
Carroll Bower

699 West Line Street, Bishop, CA 93514
(619) 873-3320

Sierra Life is published bi-monthly by Pramann Publishing, 699 West Line Street, Bishop, CA 93514, Telephone (619) 873-3320. Controlled Circulation Postage Paid at Bishop, CA 93514. All contents Copyrighted 1985. All Rights Reserved. Reproduction in whole or part without written permission from the Publisher is prohibited. Registered Trade Marks: **Sierra Life The Magazine of the High Sierra** and **Sierra Life Magazine.**

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
$14 per year. Foreign subscriptions $4 per year additional. Single copy price $2.50

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:
Six weeks advance notice. Please include old as well as new address with Zip Codes.

EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS:
Manuscripts and photographs submitted to **Sierra Life** should be accompanied by a self-addressed envelope with return postage affixed. The Publisher assumes no responsibility for loss or damage of unsolicited material.

"The Arts" is a cooperative effort of Sierra Life Magazine and the Inyo Council for the Arts. The Inyo Council for the Arts is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life in Inyo County through the arts. Projects like this are made possible in part by a grant from the California Arts Council in conjunction with the National Endowment for the Arts. Your membership is more than welcome. For information contact:
The Inyo Council for the Arts
P.O. Box 887
Lone Pine, CA 93545
(619) 876-5030

Sierra Life

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HIGH SIERRA

VOLUME VI JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1986 NUMBER 1

FEATURES

8 **Redline** *by Tom Carter and Allan Bard*
The highest ski traverse in North America

30 **Mark Twain: His Adventures at Aurora, Nevada** *by George Williams III*
Tales of Twain's ill-fated prospecting career

34 **Search Operation: Black Mountain** *by Dick Wood*
The firsthand account of a harrowing mission

38 **Water and Power** *by William Kahrl*
The history of Los Angeles' water supply in the Owens Valley

50 **A Hard Rain** *by Marv Collins*
Acid rain is no joke, and it may be heading this way

58 **The Race to Climb Mount Whitney** *by Martha Voght*
The first ascent of the highest peak—or was it?

64 **Unbaffling Baffle Repairs** *by The Down Depot*
More tips on mending down gear

page 8

page 58

DEPARTMENTS

14 **Sierra Wildlife**
Blue Grouse *by Mike McWherter*

16 **Sierra Profile**
The Real Dave McCoy *by Marty Forstenzer*

54 **Sidetrips**
Ansel Adams: Classic Images

57 **Sierra Real Estate**

66 **The Arts**
Truth in Lighting: The Photographs of Vern Clevenger *by Doug Robinson*

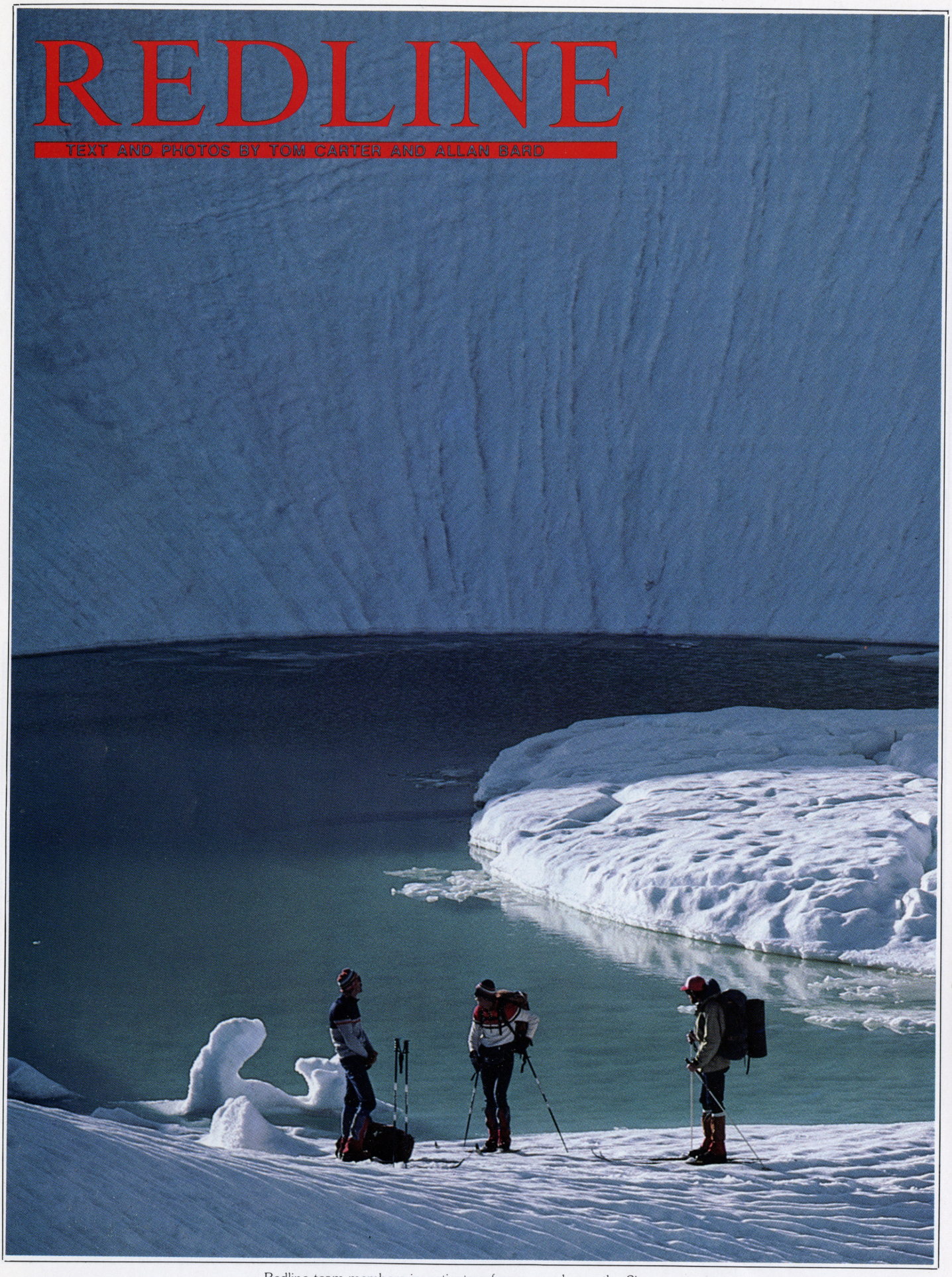
page 66

70 **Publisher's Letter**

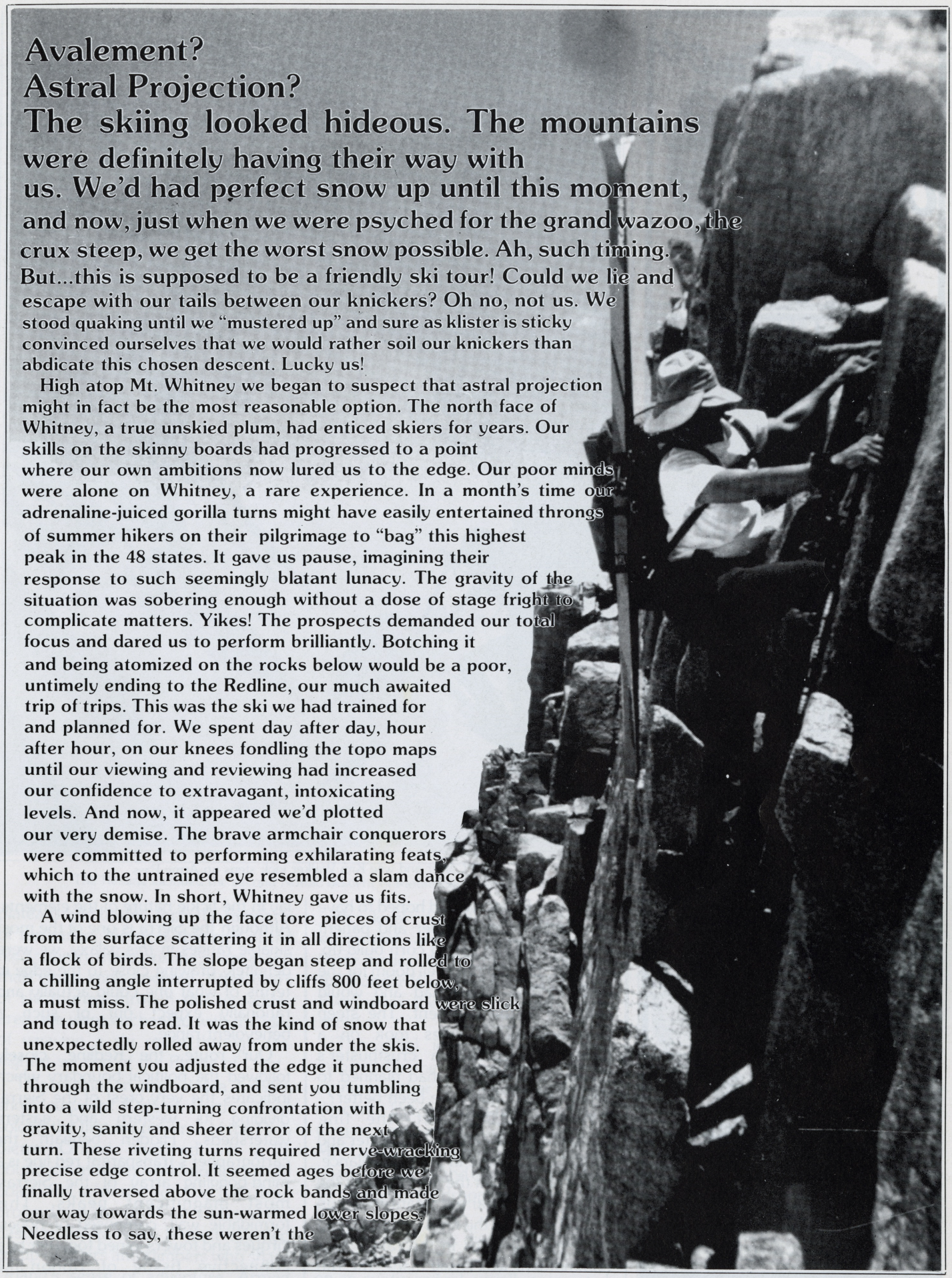
Our Cover: Mount Ritter and Banner Peak from Lake Ediza, photograph by Mike McWherter.

REDLINE

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY TOM CARTER AND ALLAN BARD



Redline team members investigate a frozen pond near the Sierra crest.



Avalement?
Astral Projection?
The skiing looked hideous. The mountains were definitely having their way with us. We'd had perfect snow up until this moment, and now, just when we were psyched for the grand wazoo, the crux steep, we get the worst snow possible. Ah, such timing.

But...this is supposed to be a friendly ski tour! Could we lie and escape with our tails between our knickers? Oh no, not us. We stood quaking until we "mustered up" and sure as klister is sticky convinced ourselves that we would rather soil our knickers than abdicate this chosen descent. Lucky us!

High atop Mt. Whitney we began to suspect that astral projection might in fact be the most reasonable option. The north face of Whitney, a true unskied plum, had enticed skiers for years. Our skills on the skinny boards had progressed to a point where our own ambitions now lured us to the edge. Our poor minds were alone on Whitney, a rare experience. In a month's time our adrenaline-juiced gorilla turns might have easily entertained throngs of summer hikers on their pilgrimage to "bag" this highest peak in the 48 states. It gave us pause, imagining their response to such seemingly blatant lunacy. The gravity of the situation was sobering enough without a dose of stage fright to complicate matters. Yikes! The prospects demanded our total focus and dared us to perform brilliantly. Botching it and being atomized on the rocks below would be a poor, untimely ending to the Redline, our much awaited trip of trips. This was the ski we had trained for and planned for. We spent day after day, hour after hour, on our knees fondling the topo maps until our viewing and reviewing had increased our confidence to extravagant, intoxicating levels. And now, it appeared we'd plotted our very demise. The brave armchair conquerors were committed to performing exhilarating feats, which to the untrained eye resembled a slam dance with the snow. In short, Whitney gave us fits.

A wind blowing up the face tore pieces of crust from the surface scattering it in all directions like a flock of birds. The slope began steep and rolled to a chilling angle interrupted by cliffs 800 feet below, a must miss. The polished crust and windboard were slick and tough to read. It was the kind of snow that unexpectedly rolled away from under the skis. The moment you adjusted the edge it punched through the windboard, and sent you tumbling into a wild step-turning confrontation with gravity, sanity and sheer terror of the next turn. These riveting turns required nerve-wracking precise edge control. It seemed ages before we finally traversed above the rock bands and made our way towards the sun-warmed lower slopes. Needless to say, these weren't the

Experience Winter

WELCOME TO BISHOP

BISHOP CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
(619) 873-8405

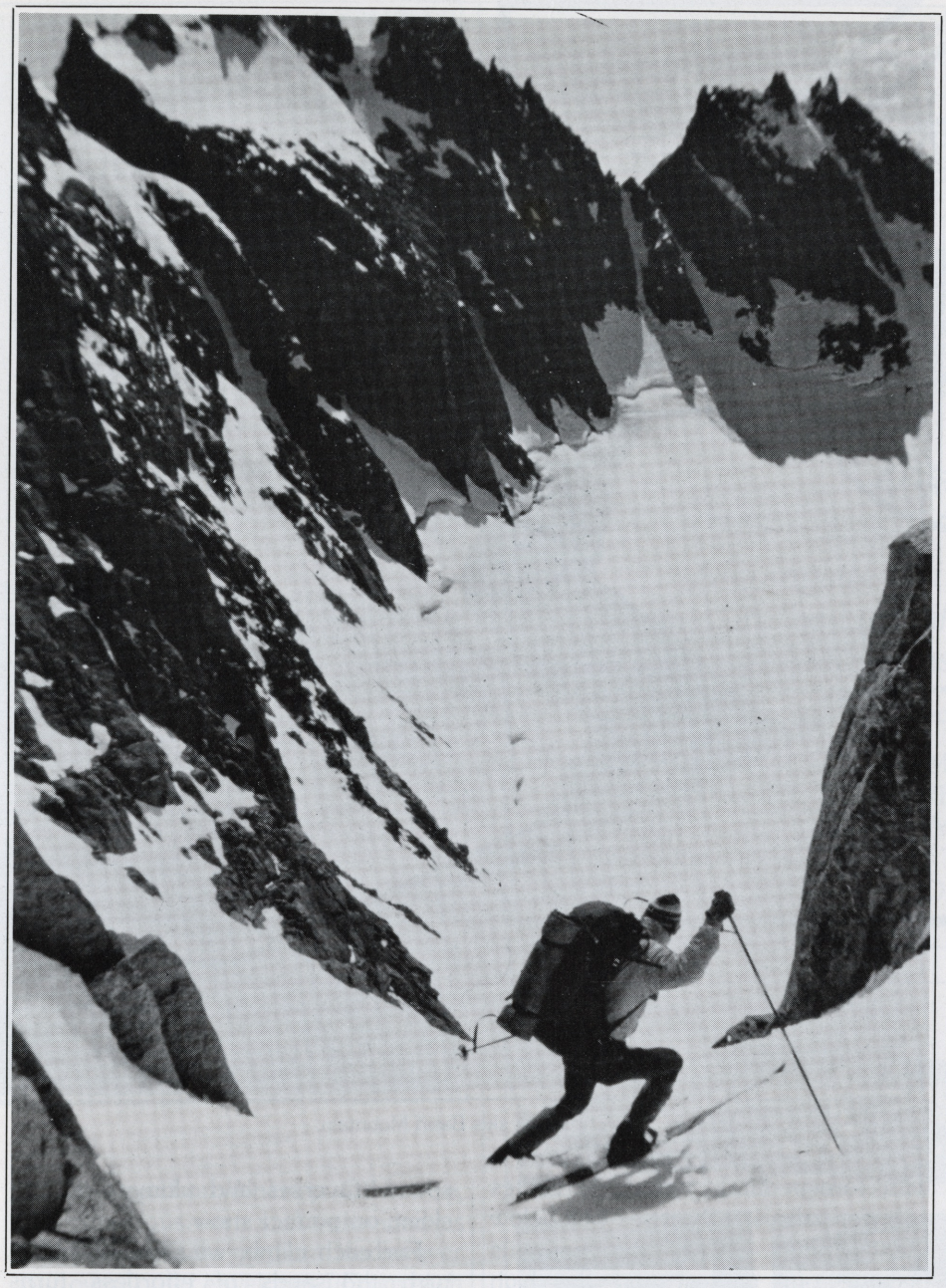
CONVENTION BUREAU
(facilities for 10 to 600)
690 NORTH MAIN STREET
BISHOP, CA 93514

Tom Carter and wife Kim Walker kick steps up Army Pass.

idyllic conditions we had hoped to have pinpointed by our clever and patient evaluation of the spring corn build-up. And yet, this did not spell doom for the Redline. The skiing had and would continue to be excellent. The steep shadowed north faces took on a nightmarish quality—a crustbuster's dream. Just what we had planned to avoid. Would July have been better?

Above 12,000 feet, the fine separation between the late winter and spring snows were in a fragile balance. We aspired to ski the very crest of the Sierra, and by ski we meant to ski up and off some of the finest, highest, and most difficult faces in the range. Our commitment was easily made; the rub lay in the fickle nature of the elements. Although the Sierra is one of the most skiable ranges in *this* galaxy, we were definitely drawing close to the edge in terms of what one could actually and rationally expect out of such a benevolent range.

Our route, the Redline, closely followed the political boundary which indicates the very crest of the Sierra, dividing its western and eastern watersheds. Hidden beneath the cartographer's transparent red line is a mind-boggling array of the Sierras' most magnificent peaks. This formidable wall, composed of ridges, cirques and towers joined together by a connective tissue of ribbon-like



The Redline included the second Nordic descent of Mount Sill's north couloir.

plateaus and basins, form the ramparts of the range. Never is this part of the high country more pristine, more grand than when snow-covered. After years of ski touring through this incredible area, we were enchanted with the idea of weaving a ski route through this highest section of the Range of Light.

This was not an original idea. In 1929, snow surveyor Orland Bartholomew soloed the first ski traverse of the High Sierra. Orland, equipped with a 25 pound down robe, rake handles for ski poles and a desire for the high line, broke down the barriers. Today in the Eastern Sierra lives a multi-talented group of skiers and climbers who share Orland's sense of adventure. Armed with local knowledge, lightweight equipment and heavyweight ideals, these modern backcountry skiers press the standards seeking that magic elixir. Every year the list of unskied peaks shrinks.

The initial idea for our ski was inspired by the notion that we could string together dozens of exciting ski descents like so many pearls. It was a unique approach. On our route from Mt. Langley to Mammoth we crossed nearly 50 passes and climbed more than 20 peaks, rarely dropping below 11,000 feet.

While skiing, we discovered that the well known, well travelled Sierra took on an exotic appeal, usually associated

THE SKI RENTER
SOUTH LAKE TAHOE • MAMMOTH

THE SKI RENTER

Your First Stop in Mammoth!

QUALITY RENTALS
Ski Packages & Demos
Pants & Parkas
X-C Equipment
Salomon Boots & Bindings
Open 7 Days a Week
Hwy 395 & Old Mammoth Rd.
Next to Shell Mart
(619) 934-6560

MARK'S
MEADOW FARMS
BAKERY GOODIES

FRESH BAKED
BREADS AND PASTRIES

2333 NORTH SIERRA HWY.
BISHOP, CA. 93514
(619) 873-3666

The BLUE GROUSE

Text and photos by
Mike McWherter

Spring snow still blanketed the high country of the Minarets giving it the look of winter. The meadow where I was camped was already greening with the heavy runoff of snowmelt. Then across the meadow came an *unt, wunt, wunt, tu-wunt, wunt, wunt* sound. I had heard this deep wooden sound before on other trips in the backcountry and always wondered what creature was making it. In the hope of discovering the source of the sound I made my way to the other side of the meadow. Next to a group of tall pines I stopped to listen. Hearing the sound again, I looked up to see a male blue grouse peering down at me from high in one of the pine trees.

A male blue grouse displays to attract females.

Grouse are members of the order *Galliformes* which includes chickenlike birds such as pheasants, turkeys, quail, partridges, and ptarmigans. Grouse and the closely related ptarmigans range over much of the Northern Hemisphere inhabiting such diverse environments as mountains, deserts, prairies and tundras. Although the origin of grouse is unclear, current evidence suggests that they may have originated in North America. Grouse display the general characteristics of ground-dwelling birds that scratch and peck while foraging. They are primarily ground-nesting birds with precocial young. All have fowl-like beaks and four toes with the hind toe very short and elevated, making the bird poorly adapted for perching.

Blue grouse *(Dendragapus obscurus)* and certain varieties of ptarmigans have carved out niches for themselves in the cooler regions of North America. Ptarmigans are most often found in the tundra regions, and the blue grouse in the coniferous zones. Blue grouse consist of eight races and are widely distributed (see map).

The Sierra Nevada has its own resident race of blue grouse *(Dendragapus obscurus sierrae)*, which lives in the Sierra as far south as Tehachapi and north through the eastern parts of Oregon and Washington. Sierra blue grouse are primarily associated with the coniferous forest, especially the Douglas fir belt.

With the approach of the spring mating season, both male and female blue grouse begin to move down from the coniferous zones. If the breeding range is not still covered by winter snow, the males will establish territories which consist of open areas for display. They need shelter and hiding places in the form of fir clumps and willows. Logs and stumps provide them with observation points.

To attract females, male blue grouse hoot from the tops of high pine trees or elevated areas on the ground. They call at different times of the day, but usually in the early morning and late evening. If displaying on the ground, both wings are slightly drooped and the tail is partially spread and raised. Neck feathers are opened to expose an oval gular sac that is surrounded by white-based neck feathers, forming a "rosette" pattern. In this posture the gular sac is partially inflated enabling him to utter the distinctive call.

If another male grouse is present during mating, the displaying grouse's eye combs become enlarged and his tail is tilted toward the other bird. The wing away from the interloper is drooped in proportion to the amount of tail tilting. The displaying male may then advance toward the intruder with an arcing dash. Tail cocking will be maintained at a maximum with wings drooping so much that they drag on the ground. He then runs forward with short, fast steps and stops with a deep grunt.

Once the interloper is run off, the male displays about the

female. He will raise and lower his body while jerking his head. He always keeps his neck rosette and nearer eyecomb in full view of her. After a few minutes of display, if the female is receptive, he moves behind her and mates.

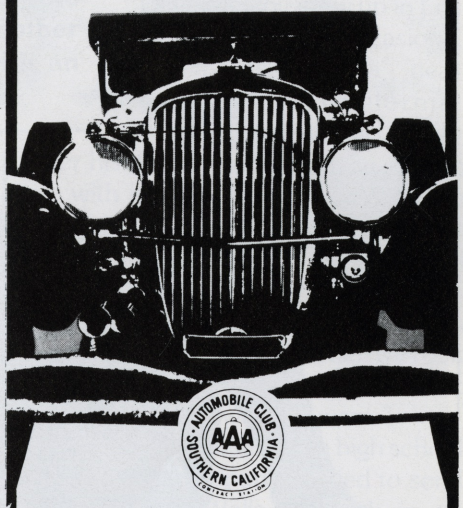
The female alone undertakes the role of nest building, egg incubation, and care of the brood. Nests are usually built near logs or under low tree branches and are fairly well concealed. The nest is often located in an area where the brood will have a good chance of finding food. Upon hatching, the young soon become fairly independent of the female. The female feeds mostly in the early morning and late afternoon while the young feed most of the day. For the first ten days the young will feed almost exclusively on insects, and as they grow older they seek out berries such as currants and Juneberries. As summer draws to an end the young birds and adults move to higher elevations following the ripening berry crop. The arrival of winter will find grouse in the sub-alpine forests. In the Sierra, white fir provides favored winter roosts. During winter they rely heavily on the needles, buds, twigs, and seeds from the white fir. The winter habitat is probably determined more by cover than by altitude.

The range of the blue grouse extends throughout the western part of North America.

Grouse possess some very uncommon traits. For a wild bird, they are often extraordinarily unafraid of people. Once while hiking the trail from Mineral King to Sawtooth Pass, I came to a meadow through which a willow-choked stream flowed. From within the willows came an odd *kuk, kuk, kuk* sound. It was a mother blue grouse calling together her brood, and leading them deeper into the safety of the willow entanglement. About due for a rest stop, I lowered my pack and sat down to watch. Soon she came out of the willows, followed by one of her little ones, and started up a nearby brushy talus slope. They were no longer alarmed by my presence, and the mother grouse even allowed me to photograph her while she posed on a rock. When I approached too closely, though, the little one quickly sneaked back into the willows and the mother grouse hopped to the top of a large boulder and flew to the upper part of the meadow.

Naturalists have been fascinated by the fact that in the late fall, at a time when most creatures head downslope, grouse move upslope and winter in conifers in the high country. Conversely, when spring arrives, they head downslope while other creatures head upslope. These characteristics have earned for blue grouse the reputation of being "eccentrics" among wild birds of the Sierra. □

MR. K
AUTOMOTIVE
COMPLETE
AUTOMOTIVE & TOWING
SERVICES



(619) 873-7149
175 WEST GROVE, BISHOP

TAYLOR'S
FAMILY
SHOES

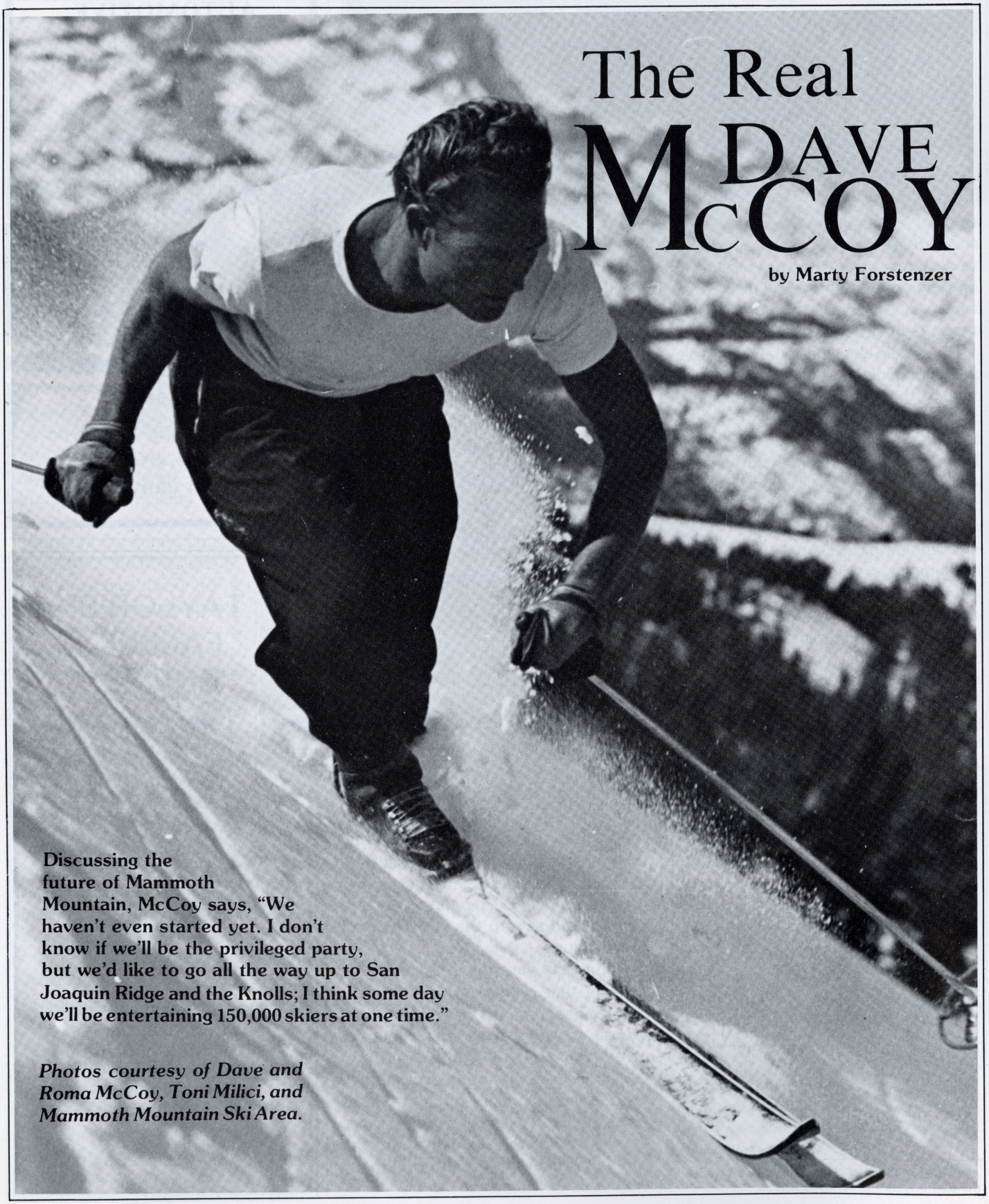
(619) 872-5583
298 N. MAIN BISHOP, CA.

ATHLETIC RUNNING SHOES
BROOKS, REEBOK, PUMA,
CONVERSE, NIKE, ADIDAS,
NEW BALANCE & AVIVA

HIKING BOOTS
HERMAN, SANTA ROSA, HI—TEC
CHIPPEWA
WOMEN'S SIZE AAA TO EE-12
MEN'S EEE SIZE 5 - 14

The Real Dave McCoy

by Marty Forstenzer



Discussing the future of Mammoth Mountain, McCoy says, "We haven't even started yet. I don't know if we'll be the privileged party, but we'd like to go all the way up to San Joaquin Ridge and the Knolls; I think some day we'll be entertaining 150,000 skiers at one time."

Photos courtesy of Dave and Roma McCoy, Toni Milici, and Mammoth Mountain Ski Area.

Dave McCoy talks of a time when he and his family could only count on "beans to eat and a little job cutting firewood." "That's the story of my life," he says, "I never knew where the next dollar was coming from."

That might surprise many people who live in the Eastern Sierra today. The 70-year-old owner-operator of Mammoth Mountain Ski Area has acquired a near-legendary stature, and his impact on the local area has been enormous. Through hard work and almost visionary thinking, McCoy took the peculiar idea of putting permanent rope tows on a forbidding, inaccessible mountain and turned it into a multimillion dollar business.

For a ski area the size of Mammoth Mountain to be owned by one person is recognized within the international business community as a unique situation. In a cover story in 1981, the Wall Street Journal reported that "in the $3.5 billion a year skiing business, now heavily controlled by big corporations like Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation (and) Ralston Purina Company, . . . Dave McCoy stands out."

McCoy has generated great respect and admiration in the local community, as well as within the world ski industry, but it might be more telling to note the fierce loyalty he inspires among his own employees. Bob Bumbaugh, who recently retired as Mammoth Mountain's Director of Research and Development after a long association, says, "You might work for as good a man as Dave McCoy, but you'll never work for a better one."

McCoy has not been one to rest on past achievements. He has been enterprising and innovative, and the history of Mammoth Mountain is one of constant growth and expansion. That process continues, and listening to some of his truly remarkable future plans, one gets a sense of McCoy's farsighted vision; looking at what he has already accomplished, one becomes aware of his ability to turn perception into reality.

McCoy is soft-spoken and unpretentious—the "strong, silent type" one friend calls him. Another friend describes him simply as "a man with an abnormal amount of common sense."

Dave McCoy grew up in Los Angeles, making occasional trips to the Sierra near Independence, California, about 40 miles south of Bishop. After his parents separated, he went to live with his grandparents in Wilkeson Washington, where he first encountered the sport of skiing. "I made my own skis out of ash," he says. "We used the boilers in a mine to soften the wood and bend them. Then we took regular logging boots, strapped our feet to the skis, and away we went."

When he graduated from high school in 1928, his grandparents tried to send him to Walla Walla to work in an orchard, but Dave had other ideas. He

McCoy and Toni Milici spent most of their spare time in the early 40's on McGee Mountain.

hitchhiked to Independence and got a job as a soda jerk at a local eating place, Jim's Restaurant. Later, he got a job working for the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power on a construction crew, eventually advancing to become DWP hydrographer. That position consisted mostly of traveling through the Sierra backcountry on skis, measuring the snowpack—a dream job for the young McCoy. He continued working for the DWP for eighteen years.

McCoy also skied in his spare time, and soon became one of the top downhill racers in California. In 1939, his skiing career nearly came to a premature end. "I broke my leg so bad they wanted to amputate it," he remembers. "For five years, I just struggled to get along. I carried crutches, and did what I could to move around. It was operated on about four or five different times in those years." After the leg healed, Dave's involvement with skiing continued.

He became a member and later president of the Eastern Sierra Ski Club, a small group of local ski devotees. His main function as club president was operating and maintaining a single portable rope tow on McGee Mountain. "We just liked to ski, and couldn't get enough runs in walking, so we put that rope tow there to pull us up the hill," he recalls.

The easily accessible McGee Mountain was in those days the center of Mono County skiing activity, but occasionally Dave or others took tows to more remote Sierra locations. Skiing was sporadic then; people found out by word of mouth where the portable tows were on any given day.

In the mid-40's, McCoy put some permanent, gasoline-powered rope tows on McGee Mountain, primarily as a service to fellow skiers. After a while, he began charging fifty cents per person to help pay for gasoline and other operating costs. Friends collected the money in a coffee can or old fishing creel at the bottom of the hill.

Among those who assisted him in his skiing ventures was Roma Carriere, an attractive blonde he had met while working at Jim's Restaurant. Recalling that meeting, Dave says that he "fell in love with her instantly." The two were married in 1942 and have six children; their oldest son Gary is today General Manager of Mammoth Mountain.

One of Dave and Roma's skiing friends in the 40's was Toni Milici, who went on to work at Mammoth Mountain as a ski instructor, and in various other capacities, for over thirty years. Milici recalls, "We used to live more or less off the land in those days. Of course, there was a store where Roma would go and buy a big load of food once a week. But, if we wanted ducks, we'd go down to the dam about dusk, and Dave would pop off a couple of ducks and Roma would cook them. Or we used to go down in the gorge and Dave would bring up a big trout, and Roma would bake that for dinner."

Through his job as hydrographer, McCoy became an expert on Sierra weather patterns and conditions. One thing he observed was that Mammoth Mountain was usually the first place to have snow in the fall, and one of the last places where it melted off in the spring. It also had great size and varied terrain. After operating at McGee for a few years, he began thinking of Mammoth as a potential site for permanent tows.

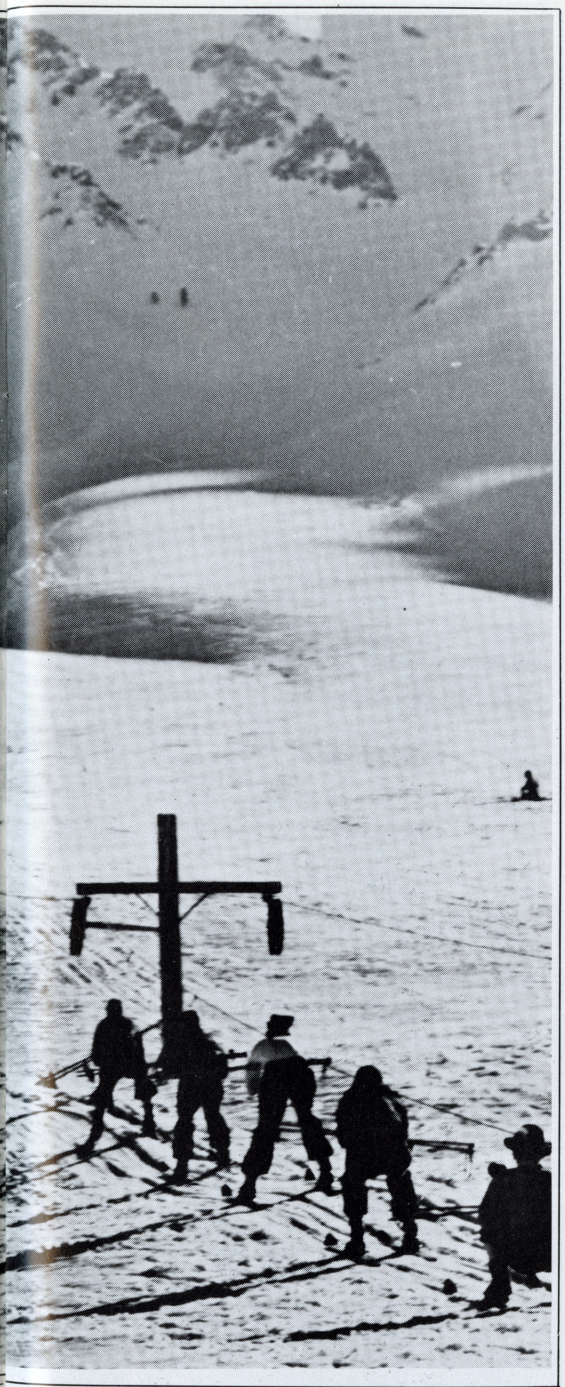
A number of Sierra skiers had by then been to Sun Valley, Aspen and other areas with chair lifts and lodging, and there was growing public interest in having a similar ski area at Mammoth. However, when the Forest Service was prompted by increasing public pressure to put a ski area proposal out to bid, nobody bid on it.

McCoy relates, "Slim Davis, who was Forest Supervisor here at that time, said, 'Well, Dave, what can *you* do?' I said, 'You just put her down on paper, and I'll try to do it.' They gave me a permit and gave me three years to try, and by gosh we did it."

McCoy quit his DWP job to start the ski area, a big gamble considering the uncertainty of the proposition. There had been legitimate reasons for the lack of bids. The Mountain was virtually inaccessible in wintertime; the only road in was a dirt track, which by autumn became buried in snow. Weather conditions were severe, with huge snowfall accumulations often piling up overnight. In addition, potential operators had feared that people would be reluctant to attempt skiing at Mammoth's 10-11,000 foot altitude.

Dave dismissed the altitude problem,

Rope tows at McGee made life easier for skiers (above). more inaccessible locations (below).



The resourceful McCoy often used snow vehicles to reach

and figured that the other obstacles could be overcome through resourcefulness and hard work. He purchased some surplus Army "weasels," a prototype snow vehicle developed for use during World War II. The weasels got people to and from the mountain, but they were undependable, often breaking down. McCoy and his mechanics constantly had to strip parts from one weasel to keep the other ones going. Eventually, the Forest Service put in a paved road which, kept clear, enabled skiers to drive to where the Main Lodge now stands. Mammoth Mountain Ski Area began with a single rope tow powered by a Model "A" engine, which McCoy and his crew built and installed themselves.

Around the mid-50's, the popularity of skiing began to grow tremendously. Southern Californians had been skiing in the mountains near Los Angeles, where snow conditions were sometimes inferior and often unpredictable. When word hit Southern California about Mammoth Mountain, offering excellent, dependable snow conditions within a reasonable drive, skiers began to flock there. Where there had been about a hundred people skiing at Mammoth on an average day, soon there were over a thousand. "It just became a bonanza before we knew it," Toni Milici says, "because Mammoth had early snow, before any other ski area in California. Also, it became a tradition for skiers from Southern California to come up to Mammoth for Thanksgiving."

Skiers who came in November would often come back later in the season. In addition, Mammoth's season usually lasted into the late spring or early summer, when other ski areas had long since shut down.

McCoy expanded to accommodate the growing demand. By the end of 1955, Mammoth Mountain had a chairlift, five rope tows, and a warming hut with a cafeteria. "We were worried that the $4.00 lift ticket would discourage some folks, but still they came," Milici says.

Today, Mammoth Mountain has 25 chair lifts, five surface lifts, two gondolas, two lodges housing sport shops and cafeterias, and a smaller "mid-chalet" with a cafeteria. On an average day, the Mountain

Boot Problems! Ski Problems! Leg Problems!

FOOTLOOSE

is totally committed to the best possible skiing experience and has become the world leader in achieving the best performance from:

Every Ski -
with Wintersteiger ski service and tuning equipment.

Every Boot -
with Superfeet® ski boot fitting systems.

Every Skier -
with Ski Legs ski condition system.

Every Body -
with the finest ski clothing and accessories.

For The Best Skiing Experience See Us At

FOOTLOOSE

If **FOOTLOOSE** *can't get the best performance from every ski and every boot . . .*

Nobody Can!

FOOTLOOSE
619-934-2400
Canyon & Minaret
Mammoth Lakes

SUPERFEET. INSOLE SYSTEMS.

SKI-TIME
RESERVATIONS INC.
TOLL FREE

(213) SKI-TIME
(800) 462-5584
(800) 752-8463

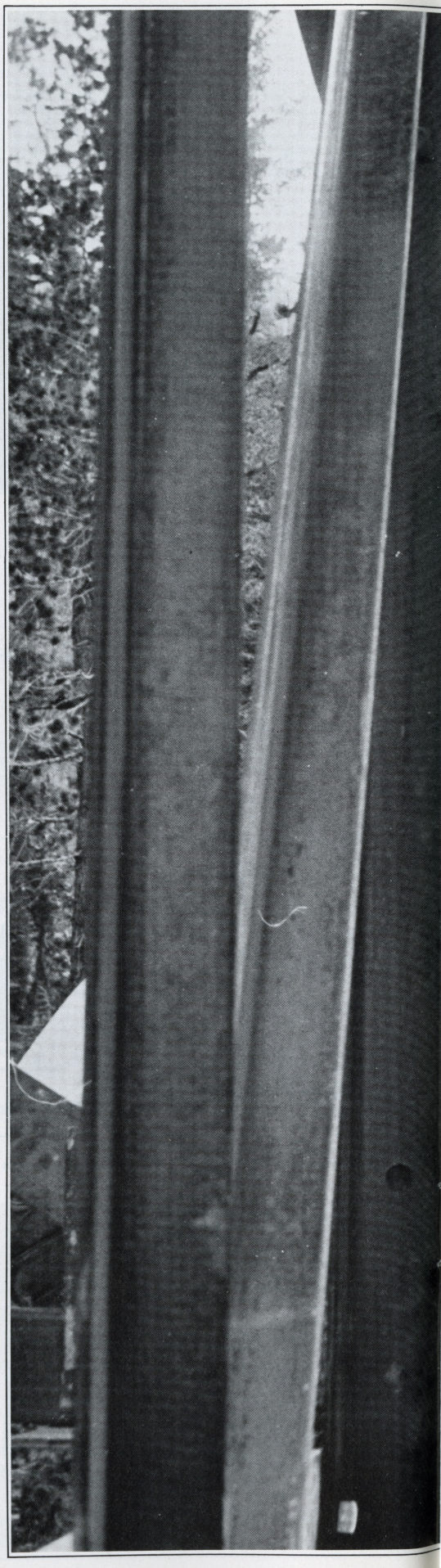
CONDOMINIUMS
RESERVATIONS
AT
MAMMOTH LAKES
FOR
ALL
SEASONS

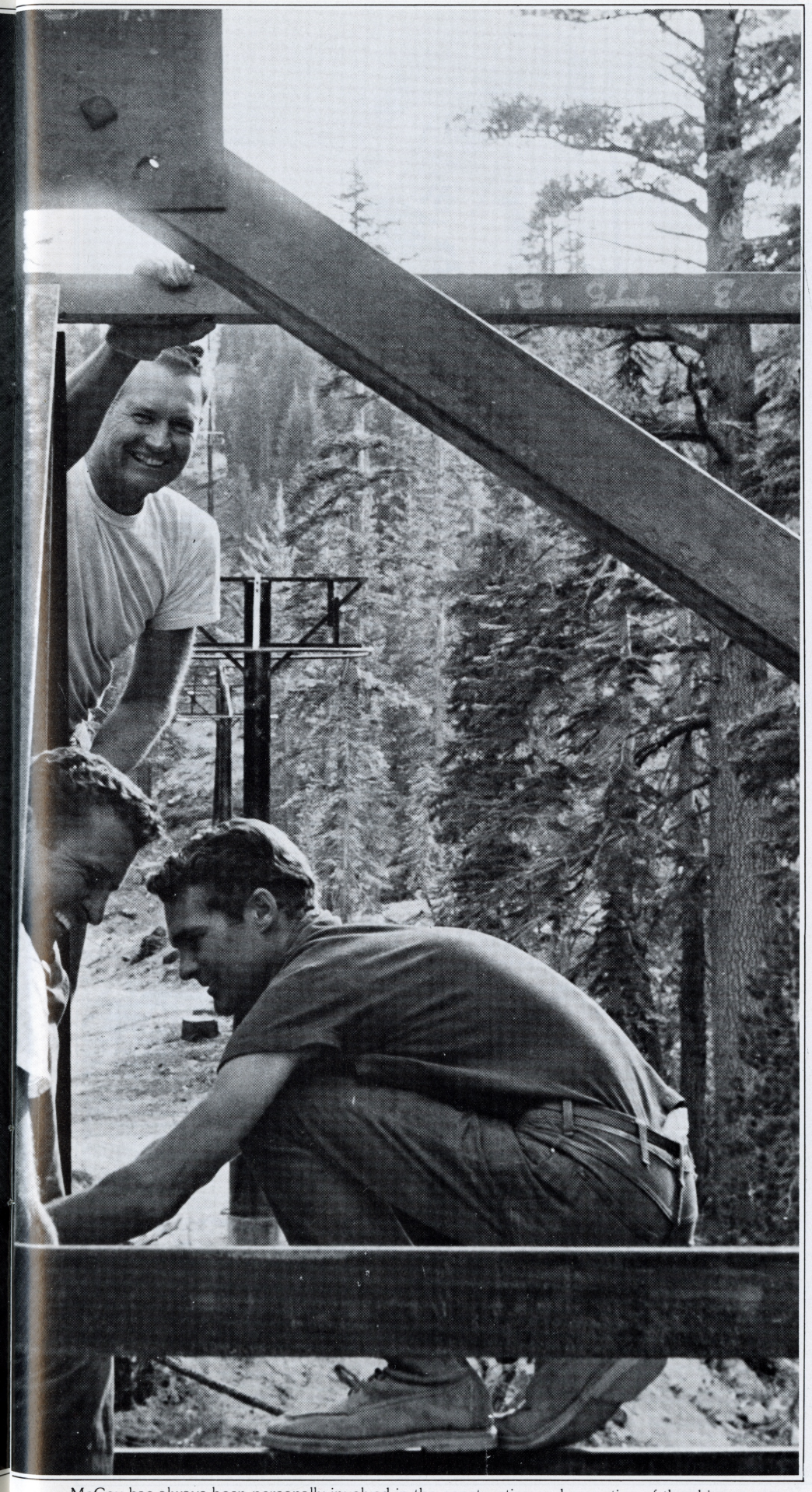
CONDOMINIUMS IN TWENTY-SEVEN COMPLEXES
TO CHOOSE FROM ECONOMY TO LUXURY.
P.O. BOX 911 MAMMOTH LAKES, CA. 93546 (619) 934-7583
AMERICAN EXPRESS VISA MASTERCARD

TOM'S SINCE 1917 PLACE
your hosts: Chuck and Debby Gemmell
A COMPLETE YEAR-ROUND RESORT.
—FAMILY DINING—
BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER
TAVERN AND OFF SALE LIQUOR
GROCERIES - LODGING - GAS STATION
GATEWAY TO X- COUNTRY SKIING IN ROCK CREEK BASIN
LOCATED IN THE INYO NATIONAL FOREST
ON U.S. HIGHWAY 395 - 25 MILES NORTH OF BISHOP
FOR RESERVATIONS PHONE (619) 935-4239

LUNCH AND DINNER MENU
The Island Café
HOMEMADE SOUPS—SALADS——ESPRESSO DRINKS——DESSERTS
SHERWIN PLAZA III MAMMOTH LAKES, CA 93546 (619) 934-3902

FREE HBO TV • DIRECT-DIAL PHONES • LOUNGE WITH FIREPLACE •
MAMMOTH
• Skiing • Fishing • Hunting
• Hiking • Sailing • Nordic
Skiing • Tennis • Relaxing
Fantastic Mid-week
Ski Packages
The International Inn
A FAMILY RESORT
P.O. Box 1089, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546 • (619) 934-2542
On Hwy. 203, In the center of Mammoth Lakes
FREE COFFEE • COIN-OP LAUNDRY
LIGHT HOUSEKEEPING • COLOR TV • SAUNA • HEATED POOL • HOT JET SPA •





McCoy has always been personally involved in the construction and operation of the ski area.

accommodates 7,000 skiers, and on one day in 1984, over 20,000 skiers used the facilities there.

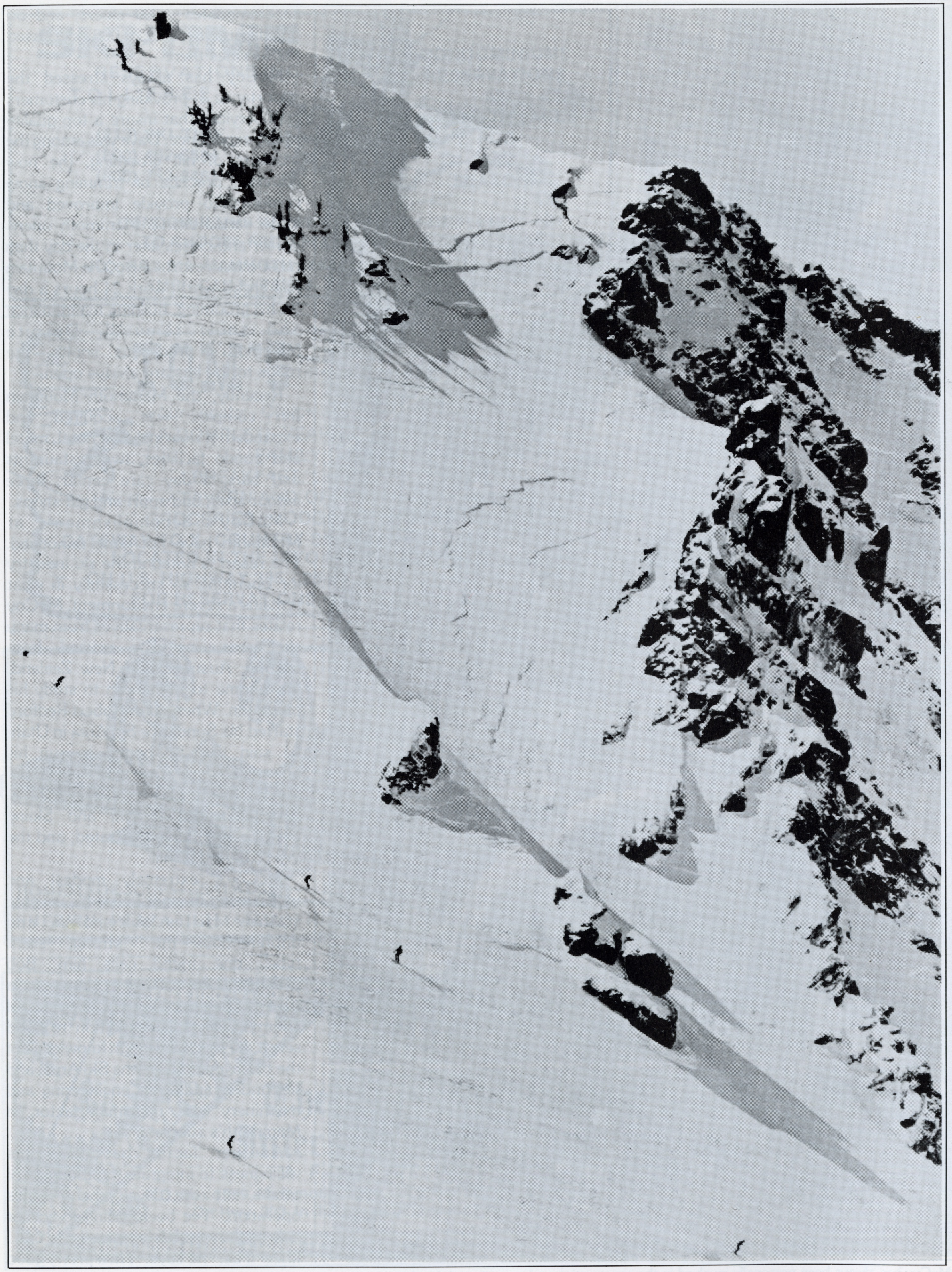
McCoy has always stressed the importance of providing his customers with services that insure a top quality skiing experience. Dave was among the pioneers of hill grooming, the now common practice of trimming snow contours to provide improved and more varied skiing. Mammoth opens earlier and closes later in the day than most other resorts. Also, the Mountain has crews which work 24 hours a day on hill grooming, building maintenance and snow removal. Despite Mammoth's prodigious snows, the roads to the lifts are always open.

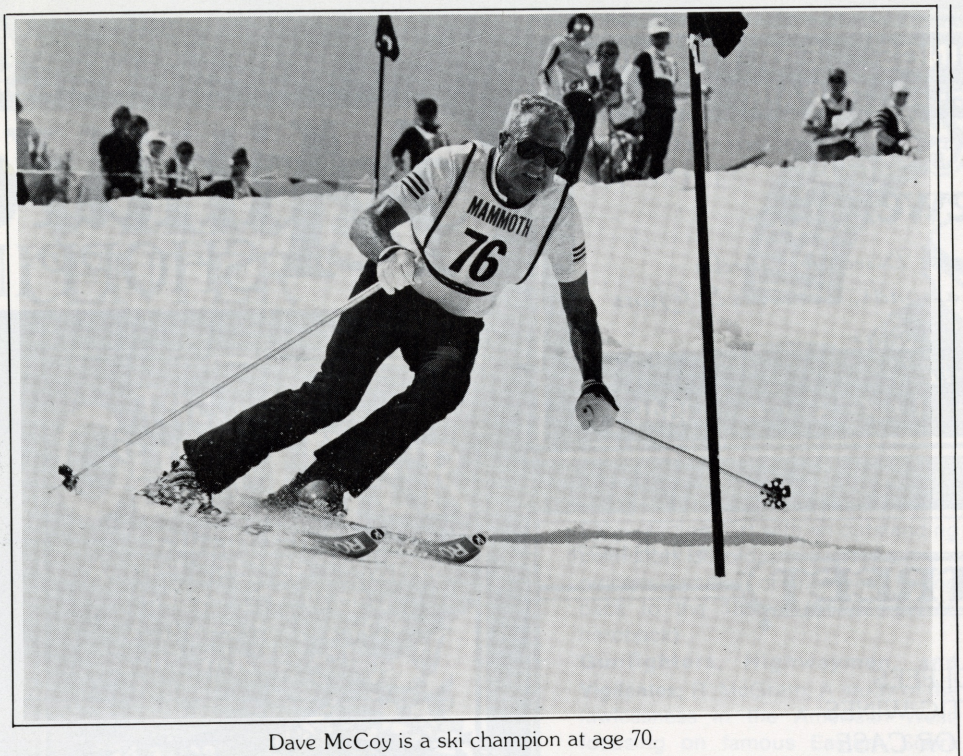
Recently, the Mammoth Mountain Inn complex was acquired and expanded. It now includes hotel, motel and condo facilities, two restaurants and bars, a day care center, three indoor spas, and sport and gift shops.

McCoy's accomplishments at Mammoth have not gone unnoticed. The resort is noted in the ski industry for operating so successfully in what remains a severe environment. McCoy relates that representatives from many ski areas, including several from Europe, Australia and New Zealand, have come to Mammoth to study his operation. When actor Robert Redford started his Sundance Ski Area in Utah, he said that he hoped to run his operation there the way that Dave McCoy has run his. Profiles of McCoy have appeared in Ski and Skiing Magazines, Sports Illustrated, and the Wall Street Journal.

McCoy's extremely modest and unassuming manner belies his weighty stature. He is soft-spoken and unpretentious—the "strong, silent type" one friend calls him. Bob Bumbaugh describes him simply as "a man with an abnormal amount of common sense." In addition to good sense, he has a thorough knowledge of the basic functions of the Ski Area, and his understanding of engineering and machinery was no small factor in Mammoth's success.

Another factor has been his willingness to integrate the thoughts of others into the development of his operation. "I've been willing to accept help all the way. I didn't ever figure that I knew it all," he says. "I'm a pretty good





Dave McCoy is a ski champion at age 70.

listener. If somebody comes up with an idea and it sounds good, then by golly we try to implement it."

Asked to name those who contributed most to the building of his organization, he answers, "There's been so *many*. If I mention one, I should mention a thousand." He does emphasize the help he has received from the Forest Service and the Bank of America, noting that their constant support was essential to his success.

McCoy's personal philosophy enhanced his ability to overcome adverse situations that would have stopped most people. "I never project from problems," he says. "I take a positive look at everything and keep on rolling ahead. Everything that happens that somebody might look at as adversity can be *so helpful*. It gives you a new approach or a new realization or understanding. There's always some way to benefit from it. It weeds out a lot, too. When you have a lot of problems, the weak ones leave you really quick, and the strong stay, they work harder and try harder."

He tends to attribute his accomplishments to a 'sixth sense.' "Sometimes I felt like it wasn't me that's doing this, it's almost like there's been someone on the outside telling me what to do, and showing me. I used that all the time."

He is a health buff, and was "always a clean liver" according to Milici. One of his favorite activities these days, in addition to downhill and cross country skiing, is motocross racing. In 1984, at the age of 69, he competed in and won a National downhill ski race. He says, "I think right now I'm in better physical shape than I've been in since I broke my leg. I can do things today that I couldn't do ten years ago. I've been working on my health, and Roma takes care of me that way and sees that I do things right."

While he was building Mammoth Mountain in the fifties, McCoy devoted a lot of time to coaching young athletes. All six of his children are excellent skiers—Gary is a former Junior National Champion, Carl raced in the World Cup Series, 'Poncho' went to the Olympics and Penny was an Olympic team alternate. Their father was the personal coach of Olympic skiers Linda Meyers and Ken Lloyd.

He was also the personal coach of Jill Kinmont, and was present when she had the tragic accident which caused her paralysis and ended her skiing career. "That started to change my whole attitude about what I was doing with kids," McCoy recalls. "It made me think a whole lot." Of Kinmont, he says, "She's a great person. She's done so many great things for people. (The accident) hasn't detracted the least bit from her." McCoy was represented as a

continued on page 27

The SKI SURGEON
mammoth lakes

REPAIRS
'OVERNIGHT SKI REPAIRS'
- QUALITY TUNE-UPS
- DELAMS
- BOOT REPAIR
- CERTIFIED BINDING
- MOUNTING & SALES

RENTALS
NEW EQUIPMENT
DOWNHILL
CROSS COUNTRY
DEMOS
KIDS SKI PACKAGES
COMPLETE ACCESSORY SALES

(619) 934-6370
ON MINARET ROAD IN FRONT OF PIONEER MARKET

THE RISING SUN

MAMMOTH'S ONLY
NATURAL FOODS
STORE AND CAFE

BREAKFAST
LUNCH
DINNER

(619) 934-8371
MAIN STREET
VILLAGE MALL WEST

Minaret SHOPPING

DIAMONDS WEDDING RINGS EAR PIERCING
WATCH & JEWELRY REPAIR

"Full Service Jewelers & Gemologists"

Sierra Jewelers

Eastern Sierra's "Personal Discount" Jeweler
Licensed Buyers of Gold, Diamonds, Cameras & Guns
Collateral Loans

(619) 934-7272
P.O.BOX 8765 MAMMOTH LAKES, CA. 93546

GIFT CERTIFICATES

WINE STREET®

(619) 934-8278

IMPORTED COFFEES
IMPORT / DOMESTIC WINES
BY THE BOTTLE OR CASE
CIGARS & PIPE TOBACCOS TOO
GIFT IDEAS FOR EVERYONE

MINARET VILLAGE, P.O. BOX 468 - MAMMOTH LAKES, CA.

---

sky king photo

LOCATED IN THE MINARET MALL
NEAR THE SAFEWAY
P.O. BOX 7119,
MAMMOTH LAKES,
CA. 93546
934-8415

1 HOUR PROCESSING -PRINT FILM
"KODAK & ECONOMY LABS AVAILABLE"
PORTRAITS - CAMERA ACCESSORIES — RENTALS
CUSTOM FRAMING — KODAK OR CUSTOM ENLARGEMENTS
COMPARE OUR PRICE ON CAMERAS AND EQUIPMENT
3 DAY DELIVERY
(IF NOT IN STOCK)

J's Flowers & Things

Check Our Super J's
Friday Flower Specials
Large Variety
of Unique Gifts
"We wanna be your florist"

Bishop	Mammoth
125 E. Line	Minaret Village
(619) 873-8533	(619) 934-8591

BREAKFAST **SALADS**

HOME OF THE WHOPPER®

BURGER KING®

SAFEWAY CENTER
CORNER OF MERIDIAN &
OLD MAMMOTH RD.
MAMMOTH LAKES CA.

GIOVANNI'S PIZZERIA

This cafe-style restaurant is the only true Italian pizzeria in the high Sierra. The original hand thrown pizzas taste and smell as if they've just come from a piping hot brick oven in Naples, Italy. Hot and tempting, made from scratch with garden fresh vegetable and meat toppings, olive oil and mozzarella cheese, the combinations are endless including Stromboli stuffed pizza. Classic homemade Italian dinners are a menu feature served along with gourmet salad bar, homemade soups and devilish desserts from Sicilian Cheese Cake to Chocolate Mousse. California wines, draft and bottled beers, everything to go.

OPEN DAILY — CREDIT CARDS WELCOME
LOCATED IN THE MINARET VILLAGE - MAMMOTH LAKES
CALL - (619) 934-7563

ON THE CORNER OF MERIDIAN AND OLD MAMMOTH ROAD, IN MAMMOTH

Village CENTER

THE OUTFITTER

QUALITY SKIWEAR, ACCESSORIES, SPORTSWEAR, SHOES, BOOTS and AFTER-SKI BOOTS FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

934-3308

Rocky Mountain CHOCOLATE FACTORY

Established 1981 TM

"The Peak of Perfection"

Hand-Dipped Chocolates
Caramel Apples
Hand-Dipped Fruits
Fudge
Brittle
Truffles (over a dozen varieties)

A wide selection of candy and gifts for all occasions

Minaret Village Shopping Center
P.O. Box 7189, Mammoth Lakes,
CA 93546 (619) 934-6269
Mail Orders Available
Gift Packaging
We accept MasterCard and VISA

STEREO SYSTEMS
& VCRs
RECORDS
& CASSETTES

1986 CALENDARS
VIDEO RENTALS
MAGAZINES
BOOKS

Booky Joint

Local History

Old Mammoth; A. Reed; G. Smith; Easy-reading text with an outstanding collection of old photographs from pioneer families of the area, dating back to the 1880's. ($14.95; $23.50 hardback)

Gunfighters, Highwaymen, and Vigilantes; R. McGrath; A study of the lawlessness in the American West, focusing on famous Eastern Sierra ghost towns Aurora & Bodie. ($16.95 hardback)

Meadow in the Sky; E. S. O'Neill; A pleasant presentation of the history of Tuolumne, Sierra Nevada's largest & most beautiful alpine meadow. ($6.95)

Rosa May: the Search for a Mining Camp Legend; G. Williams III; True story about a beautiful, intelligent woman who worked as prostitute & madam in Virginia City & Bodie. ($8.95)

Lost Cement Mine; J. A. Wright; G. Smith, ed. Tales of gold discovery near Mammoth in 1857, with first hand accounts of local mining camps & of Mark Twain's midnight expedition to the Lost Mine. ($7.95, $12.95 hardback)

Best Guides to the Area

Mammoth Lakes Sierra; G. Smith; Completely revised 4th edition, covers road ends, trail guides, history, geology, flora & fauna—all information to explore Eastern Sierra from Rock Crk. to Lundy Canyon. ($7.95)

High Mountains, Deep Valleys; L. & G. Clark; A fine collection of maps, historical & natural interpretation of that portion of Southwest Basin which includes Owens Valley, Death Valley, Mono Basin & more. ($6.95)

Mammoth-Mono Country; L & G Clark; Invaluable hiking guide to Eastern Sierra Trails of Mono County, with tips on where to fish & hike. ($5.95)

Pictorials

Above Yosemite; photos by R. Cameron, text by H. Gilliam; Truly unique aerial perspective of Yosemite Natl. Park & adjacent natural areas in full color photographs, informative text guaranteeing hours of enjoyment. ($19.95 hardback)

Sierra Nevada; Noted photographer David Muench's tribute to the splendor & majesty of the Sierra; over 100 full-color, high quality photos; a welcome gift for any occasion. ($32.50 hardback)

Sierra Sunrise; J. & L. Wilson; Take a wonderful armchair journey along entire John Muir Trail with a couple whose love for Sierra is beautifully expressed in this volume. Breathtaking photography & informative, entrancing narrative combine to capture the glory & fragile balance of High Sierra. ($8.95)

Other

Don't miss these other fine books: **Hometown in the High Country;** J. Fisher ($12.95 hardback); **The Water Seekers;** R. Nadeau ($9.95); **My First Summer in the Sierra;** J. Muir ($8.95); **Treasury of the Sierra Nevada;** L. Reid, ed. ($9.95); **Skyscapes;** E. Larson; ($16.00)

Books May Be Ordered From:
Booky Joint
Minaret Shopping Center
P.O. Box 347
Mammoth Lakes, Ca 93546
Mail check or Money Order for total amount of books, adding $1 for shipping & handling on 1st book and 50¢ for each book thereafter. Thank You.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

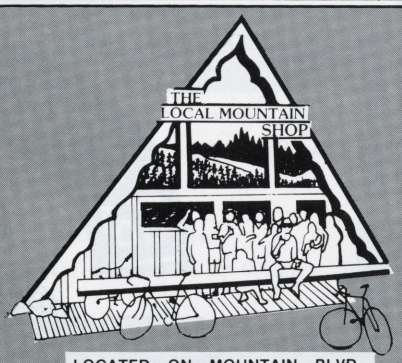
Books are shipped daily via United Postal Service (UPS). Please fill in for shipping label.

THE LOCAL MOUNTAIN SHOP

P.O. Box 9038/Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546/(619) 934-4011

FULL SERVICE RENTAL & REPAIR
SPECIALIZING IN:
SKIING
CROSS COUNTRY
TRACK
&
TELEMARK

BACKPACKING, MOUNTAINEERING



LOCATED ON MOUNTAIN BLVD.,

MAMMOTH FRAME AND PHOTO GALLERY

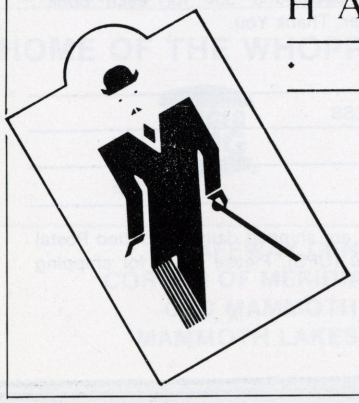
CUSTOM FRAMING AND PHOTO ENLARGING

FEATURED LOCAL ARTISTS:

JEFF SCHOR
CHIP VAN NATTAN
DICK DAHLGREN
VERN CLEVENGER
PEGGY GRAY
NINA KELLEY
CAROL ICAN
LADY JILL MUELLER

PAINTINGS AND PHOTOGRAPHS OF SIERRA SCENES

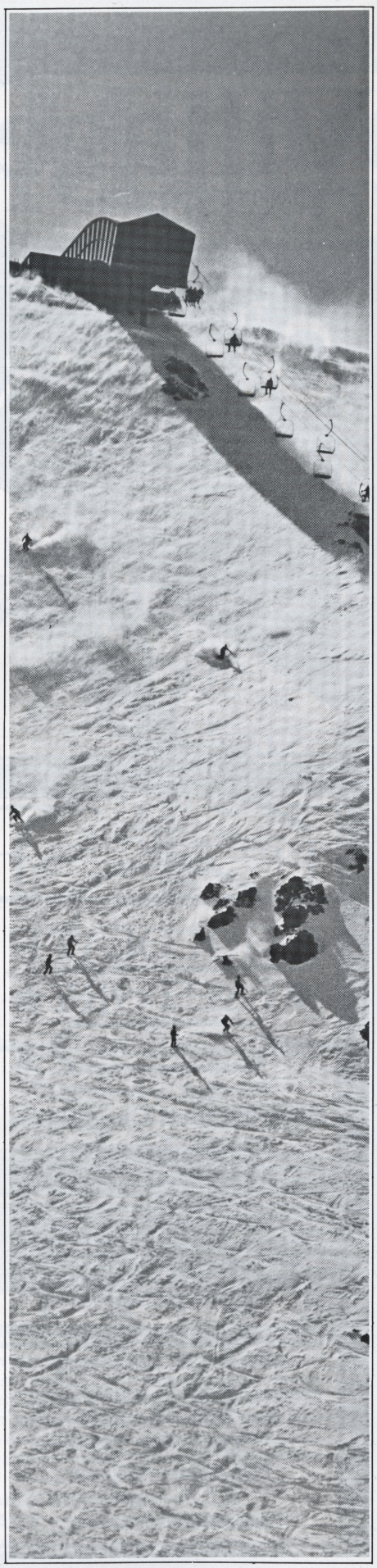
LOCATED DOWNSTAIRS IN THE SIERRA CENTRE MALL
BRAD DAWBER-PROPRIETOR (619) 934-4911

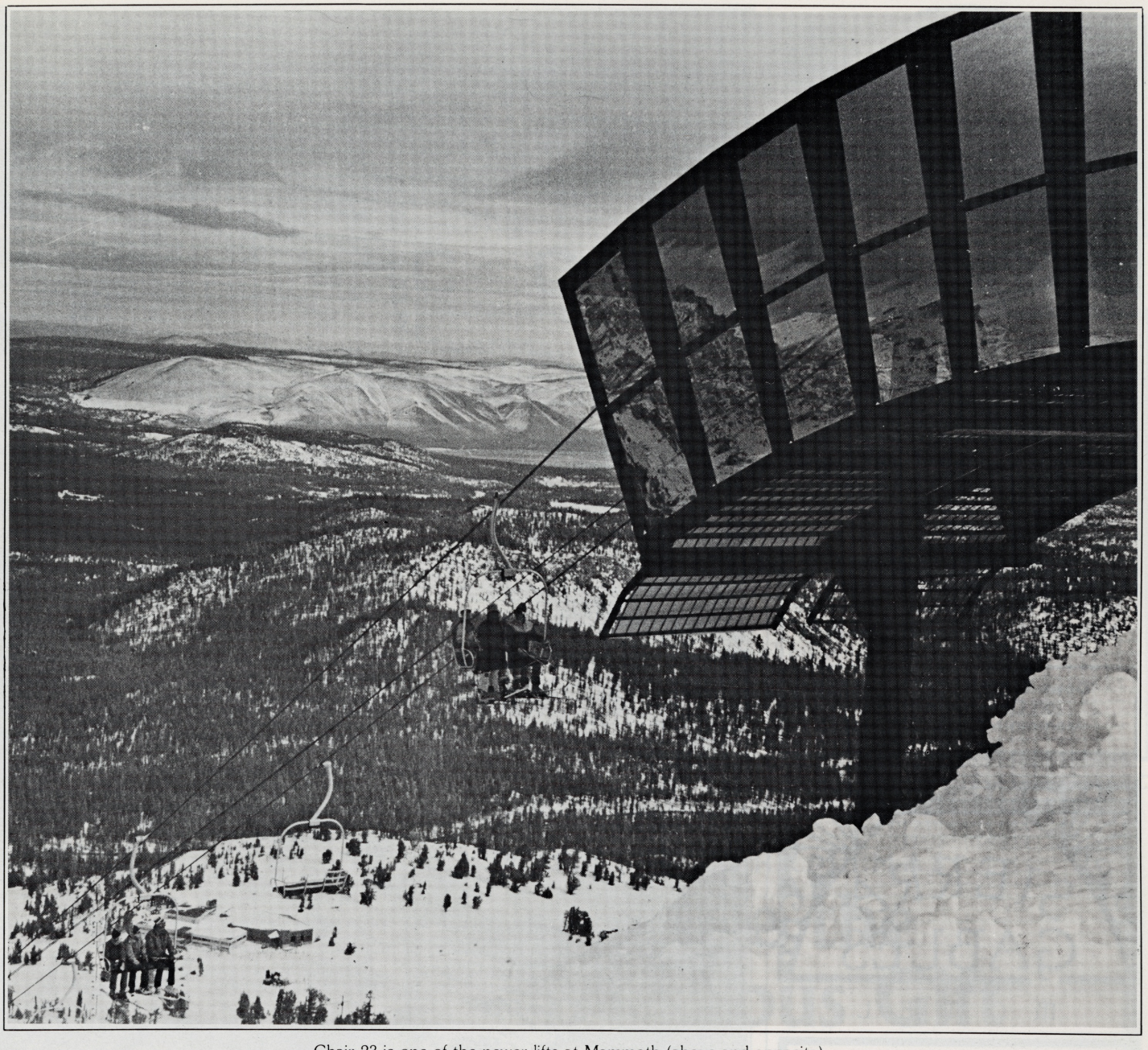


HABERDASHERY

• FOR MEN •

Located in the Sierra Centre Mall
Mammoth Lakes, CA. 93546
P. O. Box 7963
(619) 934-8981
Pat Forgeron, proprietor





Chair 23 is one of the newer lifts at Mammoth (above and opposite).

McCoy continued

major character in the *Other Side of the Mountain* book and film series.

The resort owner was in favor of the recent incorporation of Mammoth Lakes into a city, noting that his organization endorsed the move. "I think it's great, it's something that had to happen," he says. "I'm not saying that we'll always be in accord with the thinking of the City Council, because we're in two different spheres, but I think things will be much, much better than they were before."

Discussing the future of Mammoth Mountain, McCoy says, "We haven't even started yet. I don't know if we'll be the privileged party, but we'd like to go all the way up to San Joaquin Ridge and the Knolls; I think some day we'll be entertaining 150,000 skiers at one time."

Many of his future plans center on turning Mammoth Lakes into a major four-season recreational resort. "The Mammoth Mountain Inn, before we acquired it, had been bankrupt and through eight or nine other management groups. We see that with it, we can develop a real strong year-round business, and we can keep more of our employees year-round. We can entertain the summer guests that come into the area, and package things like Yosemite trips and Bodie trips and organized backpacking and mountain climbing."

His plans include a nine-hole golf course, and a variety of other facilities. "We want to put in a reservoir for snowmaking, and that reservoir could be used for teaching flyfishing or casting, or it could be used as a waterski racing training area. Then that water could be pumped back on the Mountain, and it would rotate, it wouldn't be lost."

As he talks about Mammoth's future, he becomes animated, and the ideas roll out rapidly. "We could have ice skating, horse trails, cross-country skiing trails, snowmobile trails. . . I can see that Mammoth could be turned into one of the largest health resorts in the nation, if that's the way we set it to go—

Command Performance
at Mammoth
Ski Rentals

HAS THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT FOR YOU!
'MICRO-RACING FINISH'
SKI TUNE-UPS
By Wintersteiger
We feature equipment from Blizzard, Kneissl, Nishizawa, Pre, Koflach, Dynafit, Heierling, Tyrolia, Dachstein, & Raichle.
WE ARE A KNEISSL NATIONAL DEMO CENTRE

Advance Reservations - Toll Free
1-800 FAST SKI 1-800 327-8754

"Down Under" Cask 'n Cleaver
on Old Mammoth Rd.
Mammoth Lakes CA. 93546

JUST 20 MINUTES TO
MAMMOTH SKI AREA
SIERRA GABLES
MOTEL

STAR ROUTE 1,BOX 94
CROWLEY LAKE, CA. 93546
SINGLE UNIT - WINTER RATES
$40.00 PER NIGHT - 2 PERSONS
ONE-BEDROOM - WINTER RATES
$50.00 PER NIGHT - 2-4 PERSONS
$5.00 PER NIGHT EACH
ADDITIONAL PERSON

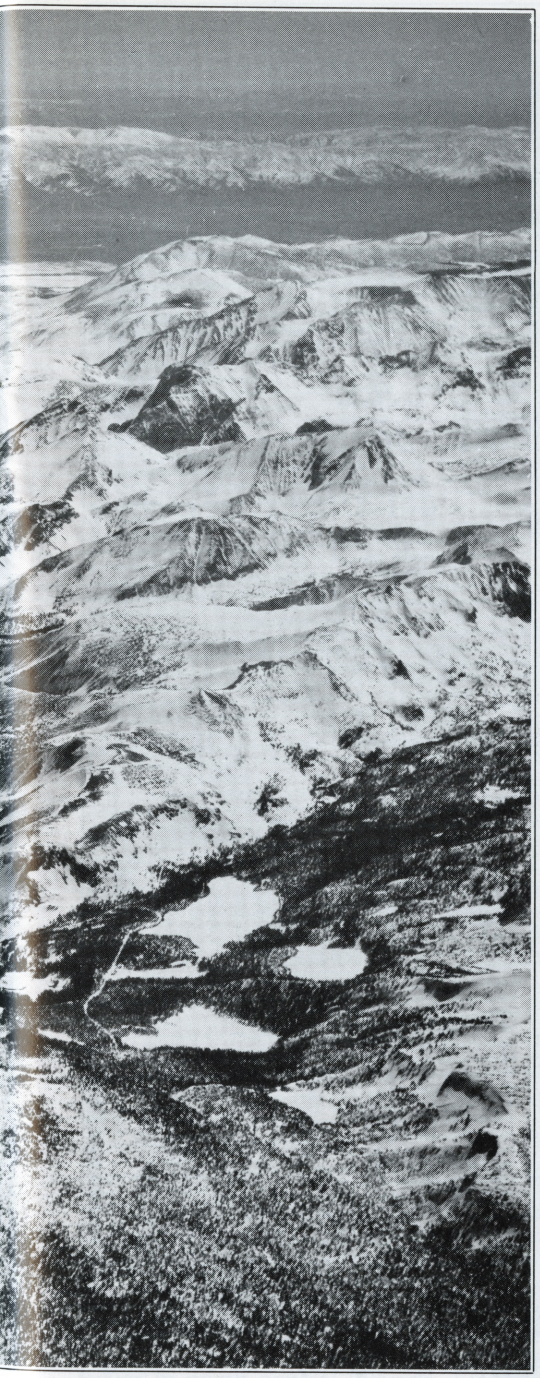
FOR RESERVATIONS CALL:
(619) 935-4319

and there's no reason we can't! Everyone's getting so health conscious now, people want longer life and better enjoyment of life, and I think we could give it to them here."

"We need a big RV park to the size that no one imagines. At Mammoth Mountain Inn, we can provide more recreation out of that one spot than the whole Sierra range does. We take care of more people in one day, than are allowed to go in the back country *all year*. In the summertime, Crowley Lake takes care of more on opening weekend than can go in the Sierra *all summer*. Those kinds of concentrations have to happen, and we hope to get into that some day."

Asked his feelings about the need to balance recreational development with ecological considerations, he comments, "I think the environmentalists are great. They've really awakened us as to how to take care of the mountains and nature and the environment. We'd like to think that we can take part of the Forest Service land, and give an equally good experience as Yosemite gives them, and still not take anything away from the guy who wants to go into the back country."

"Anybody who's been to Europe and



seen what they've done there knows how it can be done. When you go climbing, you go climbing right out of some small villages. You may pass two or three little remote villages getting to a mountain trail. They don't figure that they've hurt their environment, because they've *used* the country. We're trying to do that here."

Developing Mammoth Lakes into the largest four season recreational resort in the nation seems like a farfetched idea to some. One look at what Dave McCoy has already done at Mammoth leaves little doubt about his ability to turn that dream into reality. □

the
CORNICE
ski & sports

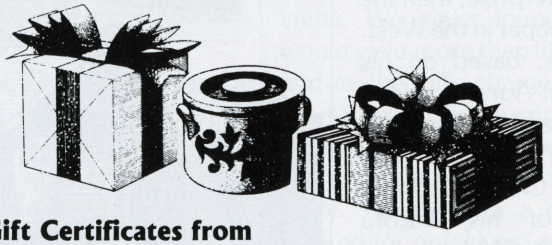
SKI RENTALS
$7.50 (619) 934-2955

CUSTOM BOOT FITTING

PURVEYORS OF THE FINEST EQUIPMENT & CLOTHING

LOCATED ON MAIN ST. NEXT TO SHAKEY'S
P.O. BOX 560 MAMMOTH MTN., CA. 93546

THIS CHRISTMAS
Give the Delicious Gift



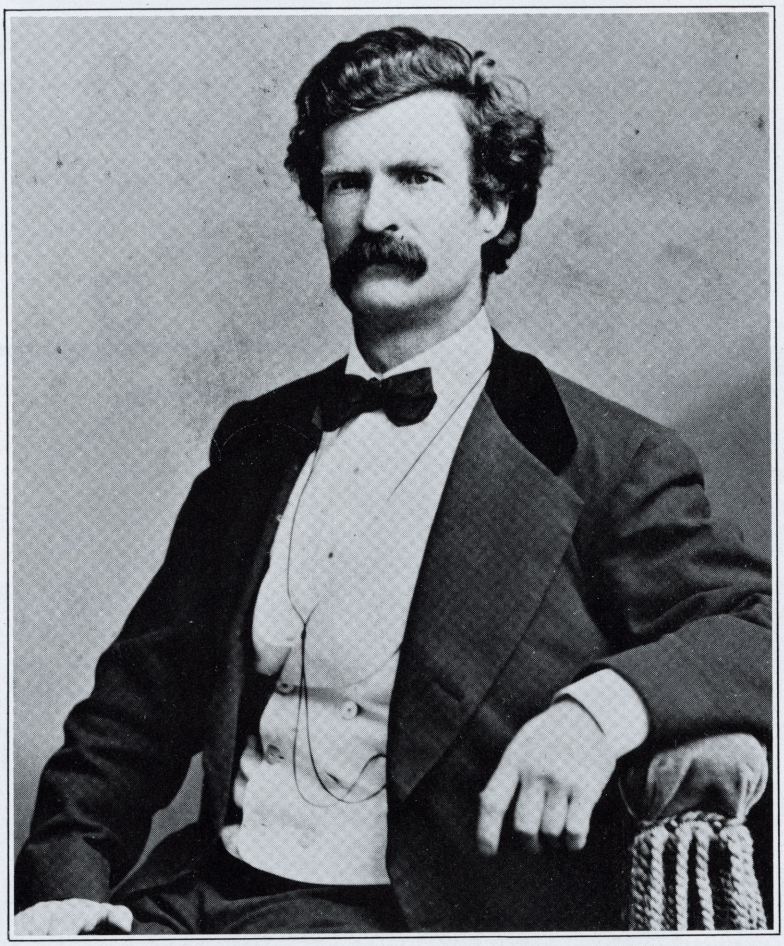
Gift Certificates from Whiskey Creek. After 15 years, still Mammoth's best restaurant.

So this Christmas, give the gift people really want . . . even if that person is you.

WHISKEY CREEK

Bishop
(619) 873-7174

Mammoth Lakes
(619) 934-2555

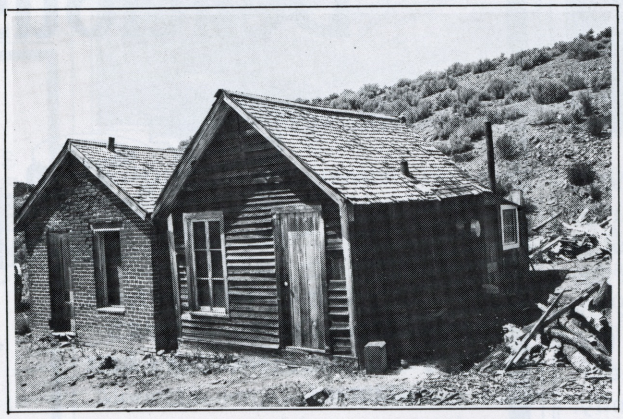


MARK TWAIN

His Adventures at Aurora, Nevada

By George Williams III

Mark Twain was one of the first men attracted to the Eastern Sierra region by early gold and silver discoveries. Twain, who was still known then as Sam Clemens, prospected and mined at Aurora from April to September, 1862. Though he failed as a miner, his mining camp experiences at Aurora provided Clemens with humorous stories which he wrote down and sent to the *Territorial Enterprise*, then the leading newspaper in the West. These stories, based on his experiences at Aurora, helped Clemens to land his first full time writing job on the *Enterprise*. Clemens later made use of his Aurora experiences in his second book, *Roughing It*. Ironically, Clemens' failure as a miner led to his first success as a professional writer.



Mark Twain's Aurora cabin

When Americans think of Mark Twain, we usually associate him with *Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn* and the Mississippi River. Though Twain grew up along the Mississippi River and later worked four and a half years as a river pilot, he spent five and a half important years in California and Nevada where he adopted writing as a career and won his first notoriety as an important humorist. Twain's adventures as a prospector and miner at Aurora, Nevada were crucial to his early writing success.

Sam Clemens arrived in Carson City in August, 1861, due to a combination of circumstances. First, he had lost his job as a river pilot due to the outbreak of the Civil War, which had closed river traffic along the Mississippi. Secondly, his older brother, Orion, had been appointed Secretary of Nevada Territory by Ed Bates, a member of Lincoln's cabinet. Afraid he would be forced to pilot military gunboats, and sensing his fortune could be made in the West, Sam tagged along with Orion to Nevada. The brothers pledged to unite their energies toward the common goal of becoming independently wealthy in Nevada.

At first Sam worked as Orion's private secretary. But when he learned that his salary was taken out of Orion's meager Federal salary, Sam decided to look elsewhere for his fortune. He made a trip to Lake Tahoe where he staked a 300 acre timber claim. Then he prospected and mined for

The Territorial Enterprise building in Virginia City, Nevada (above).

silver in north central Nevada. Finally he returned to Carson City where he was bombarded by news of the latest mining discoveries, of men who had nothing a month ago and were now filthy rich because their mines had paid off. In a short time Clemens was bitten by silver fever and soon was as crazy as the rest.

Clemens decided to make another whole-hearted attempt at silver mining. Aurora, Nevada, 120 miles south of Carson City, hidden in the hills just north of Mono Lake, was the latest rage. Clemens decided to go to Aurora and in early April took one of the first stages down.

When Clemens arrived in Aurora, the camp consisted of about 3,000 men. Each day the stage brought in 25-30 newcomers. Men lived in tents, dugouts in the hillsides, and wooden shacks, but already sturdy brick structures were being thrown up. Food prices were high and the cost of feeding a horse was astronomical; food and feed had to be hauled down from Carson.

Throughout his six months at Aurora, Clemens was partners with several men: Horatio Phillips, Bob Howland, the nephew of Nevada Governor John Nye who would later be the fearless Aurora town marshal, Cal Higbie, whom Twain dedicated *Roughing It* to, and Orion, who sent Sam money each week from Carson City for mining supplies, food, and funds to buy wildcat mines. Several times a week Sam wrote Orion and excitedly told him news of his latest discovery and made pleas for more money to invest in the Aurora properties. Sam was convinced the Aurora mining claims would make he and Orion millionaires.

With snow falling nearly each day throughout the spring, Sam's first problem was finding a place to live. He and Phillips bought a cheap cabin. The only problem, the cabin was located in Chinatown, then considered a less desirable place. Sam and Phillips persuaded friends to help them move the cabin uptown. Once the cabin was in place, their friends cornered Sam and Phillips and made them buy them all drinks at a nearby saloon. Sam later figured out it would have been cheaper to have bought a more expensive cabin uptown.

Sam and his partners scoured the hills above Aurora examining ledges and making claims. "We took up various claims, and commenced shafts and tunnels on them, but never finished any of them. We had to do a certain amount of work on each to "hold" it, else other parties could seize our property after the expiration of ten days. We were always hunting up new claims and doing a little work on them and waiting for a buyer—who never came. We never found any ore that would yield more than fifty dollars a ton; and as the mills charged fifty dollars a ton for working ore and extracting the silver, our pocket money soon melted away and none returned to take its place. We lived in a little cabin and cooked for ourselves; and altogether it was a hard life though a hopeful one—for we never ceased to expect fortune and a customer to burst upon us someday."

Violence was common in Aurora; the trouble usually stemmed from drinking or claim jumping. Clemens had his problems with claim jumpers. In May, three men with revolvers took possession of he and Phillips' "Monitor" mine. Clemens climbed into the hole

WESTRIDGE MANOR
SHOPPING CENTER
OFF WEST LINE STREET

The WINE BARREL at MANOR MARKET offers the largest selection of imported and domestic wines in the Owens Valley.

MANOR MARKET
3100 WEST LINE ST.
(619) 873-4296

SIERRA SAVE
PHARMACY
TRULY
PERSONAL
PHARMACEUTICAL
SERVICES
24 HOUR EMERGENCY
PRESCRIPTION SERVICE
(619) 873-7144
3100 A WEST LINE ST.

KOBY'S True Value HARDWARE STORES
MORE THAN A NAME —IT'S
OUR WAY OF DOING BUSINESS
ELECTRICAL & PLUMBING
SUPPLIES, HARDWARE & POWER
TOOLS, PAINT, WALLPAPER, LAWN
& GARDEN SUPPLIES, SMALL
APPLIANCES AND GIFTS
(619) 873-3106
3100 B WEST LINE ST.

beside the claim jumpers and demanded possession of the mine. The claim jumpers refused to give up the mine and declared they were prepared to die for it. Clemens immediately consulted an attorney who said there was nothing the law could do unless the claim jumpers used forced against them. Clemens could try the case in the District Court, only there wasn't a District Court.

In early June, the Monitor suit was settled. Clemens and Phillips essentially won though they were forced to give up a small portion of their claim to the jumpers.

Apparently, Clemens had one promising claim: the Annipolitan. In *Roughing It*, Mark Twain combined the stories of the Annipolitan and the Monitor in the fictionalized account of the Wide West mine.

For a week, Twain wrote, he and Cal Higbie believed they were millionaires. It all stemmed from their involvement with the Wide West, which was in reality an extraordinarily rich gold mine. According to his story, Clemens and Higbie had discovered a "blind lead," that is, they had learned that a spur of the Wide West was actually a separate vein from the Wide West. This meant they could file on the blind lead and take possession, which they did. All they had to do to keep possession of the blind lead was to work it within ten days which they failed to do and thereby lost the mine.

In reality, Clemens, Phillips and Bob Howland owned the Annipolitan, a promising claim located very near the Wide West. Also located nearby were the Pride of Utah and the Dines. For a time it was believed the Annipolitan was a separate vein. Later it was learned the Annipolitan vein was actually part of the Pride of Utah mine. Clemens and his partners lost all rights to the Annipolitan, their best of all prospects.

"At last," Twain wrote, "flour reached a dollar a pound, and money could not be borrowed on the best security at less than eight percent a month (I being without the security, too), I abandoned mining and went to milling. That is to say, I went to work as a common laborer in a quartz mill, at ten dollars a week and board. . . I will remark, in passing, that I only remained in the milling business one week. I told my employer I could not stay longer without an advance in my wages; that I liked quartz milling, indeed was infatuated with it; that I had never before grown so tenderly attached to an occupation in so short a time; that nothing, it seemed to me, gave such scope to intellectual activity as feeding a battery and screening tailings, and nothing so stimulated the moral attributes as retorting bullion and washing blankets—still, I felt constrained to ask an increase in salary.

He said he was paying me ten dollars a week and thought it a good round sum. How much did I want?

I said about four hundred thousand dollars a month, and board, was about all I could reasonably ask, considering the hard times.

I was ordered off the premises! And yet, when I look back to those days and call to mind the exceeding hardness of the labor I performed in that mill, I only regret that I did not ask him seven hundred thousand."

Some time in May, Sam Clemens began writing letters to the *Territorial Enterprise*. The letters humorously told of a miner's trials and tribulations in the mining camps. Clemens signed the letters "Josh." None of these letters have survived but they were obviously well done for they caught the attention of Joe Goodman, the owner and editor of the *Enterprise*.

In late July, Joe Goodman wrote Clemens and offered him a job as reporter on the *Enterprise* for twenty-five dollars a week. This may not seem like a great deal today, but in 1862 a miner risked his life in deep tunnels for twenty dollars a week and this was considered top pay. A week after Clemens received Goodman's offer, he wrote Orion that he intended to go to work for the *Enterprise*.

But Sam Clemens was tenacious. He had gone to Aurora to make his fortune. He had invested much time and money. It was difficult for him to pull out now. So he stayed in Aurora for another six weeks until he was completely broke.

In mid-September, broke and unable to pay for stage fare, Sam Clemens left Aurora on foot and began making his way across 120 miles of deserts and mountains to Virginia City where he would take up his new job as reporter

for the *Territorial Enterprise*. Clemens had no idea that he was walking dead broke across the Nevada desert straight into American history at Virginia City.

For it was in Virginia City six months later that Clemens adopted his famous pen name, Mark Twain. During his two year stay on the *Enterprise*, Twain acquired notoriety and a reputation as an important humorist. Twain's experiences as a miner at Aurora helped him to appreciate the miner's dreams and struggles. This helped him to fit into his new role as mining camp journalist on the most important paper in the West.

In 1865, humorist Artemus Ward, whom Twain had met in Virginia City, helped Twain to find a publisher for "The Jumping Frog of Calaveras County." This story was reprinted in many major newspapers throughout America and helped to establish Twain's reputation in the East.

In 1869, Twain published his first book, *The Innocents Abroad*, based on travel articles he had written for the *Alta California*. *The Innocents Abroad* was an immediate success and brought Twain fame and fortune. He followed this in 1872 with *Roughing It*, the story of his Western years which included his experiences as a silver miner at Aurora.

In 1876, Mark Twain published *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* followed in 1885 by *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. These novels are today considered definitive works of American literature.

If Sam Clemens had become a millionaire silver miner as he desired, America would never have gained Mark Twain and such great literary works as *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*. It is a strange irony, that failure at Aurora eventually led to Mark Twain's literary success.

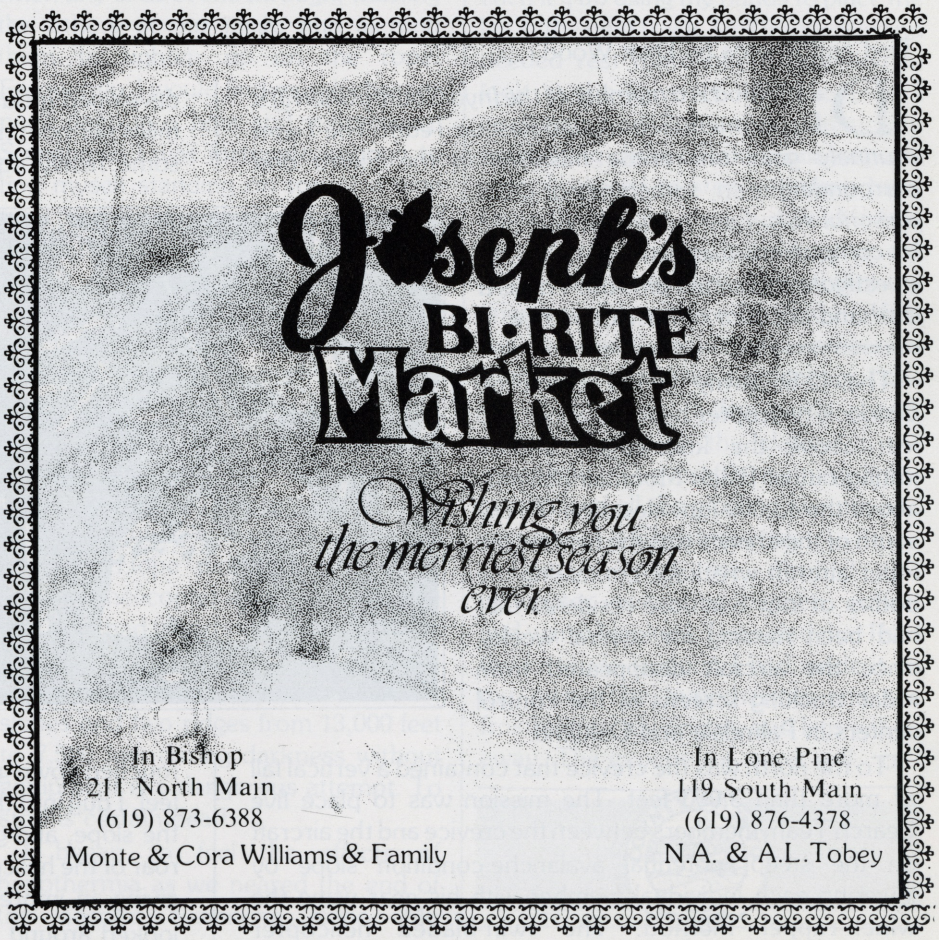
George Williams III is the author of THE GUIDE TO BODIE, ROSA MAY, THE MURDERS AT CONVICT LAKE, and THE REDLIGHT LADIES OF VIRGINIA CITY, NEVADA. He will shortly publish MARK TWAIN: HIS ADVENTURES AT AURORA AND MONO LAKE and MARK TWAIN: HIS EARLY YEARS AT VIRGINIA CITY, NEVADA. To order books write Tree By The River Publishing, Box 413-SL, Riverside, CA 92502.

Happy Holidays

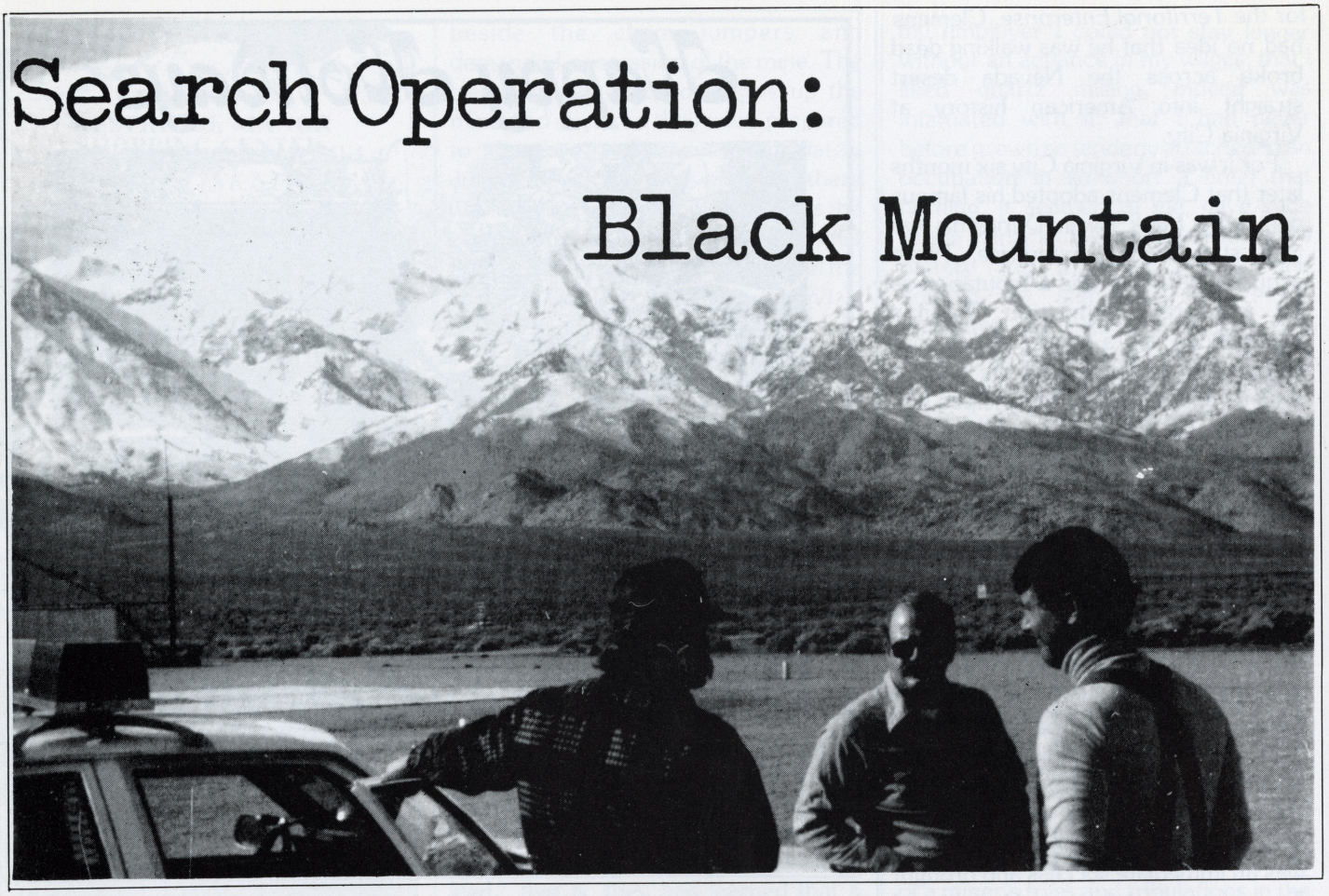
DWP

Los Angeles

Department of Water and Power



Search Operation: Black Mountain



Text and Photos by Dick Wood

Dick Wood is a member of the Inyo County Sherriff's Department Search and Rescue Team. The Team routinely goes on rescue missions in the Sierra and surrounding area, sometimes at great personal risk. Last winter, Wood and his companions went into the Sierra to investigate a downed aircraft. This is a firsthand account of his experience.

The U.S. Army CH-47 twin-prop Chinook helicopter hovered about 150 feet above the knife-edged crevice jutting out of Black Mountain, slightly above the 13,000 foot elevation. To the south of the crevice was the twin engine Piper aircraft wreckage containing the bodies of four San Jose residents that had been missing for several weeks, since the aircraft disappeared from radar tracking screens at the control centers in Palmdale and Oakland.

To the north was the crevice that contained a vertical fall of more than 3,000 feet. The mission was to place five Search Team members between the crevice and the aircraft on the steep, potential avalanche-condition slope by lowering each individual member with his gear using the winch-rappel method. The twin-bladed helicopter developed ground winds of blowing snow in excess of 100 miles per hour making visibility near zero. One member and some heavy equipment were lowered first to determine snow depth, and to provide something to hang on to in view of the pilot's estimates of high ground winds.

I was lowered through the four foot square trap door in the belly of the Chinook. I grasped the cable and ropes tightly with my gloves as the swinging effect arced me out over the crevice, across the rib of jagged shale, and back again to the avalanche slope. I looked up at the helicopter some 150 feet above me to check my pendulum swing in relation to the hovering stability of the craft. I started to look down as I began the backward swing across the slope when I felt the 100 mph turbulence of blowing snow burning deep into my face. I couldn't see as I touched down gently into the snow. Unhooking the lines by feel, I dug into the snow to avoid being blown off the face of the slope, and gave the release signal to the chopper. The roar of the helicopter's engines soon became silent as it left, giving an impression of some mysterious spacecraft. As I looked around in awe at the beauty of the snow-capped

majestic peaks about me and the valley floor below, I momentarily forgot about my friends nearby digging themselves out of their protective snow caves.

Reaching the downed Piper, we determined that none of the passengers had survived. I began photographing the wreckage and human remains, but the electric eye of the cameras froze immediately. I kept one camera warm beneath my parka while I worked for short periods with the other. Both cameras finally iced up, freezing the lens settings and the protective filters.

Ice had formed on our eyebrows and small icicles were hanging from Bruce Albert's mustache. At three o'clock I checked the temperature at 22 degrees. Wind chill factoring would provide a corrected temperature of 11 degrees and dropping. The bodies were bagged and the equipment collected in a large rope net for the chopper. The chopper returned at four o'clock as planned and we collectively hooked the net to the winch cable lowered by the chopper's crew. The sun went down, leaving us in the shade with rapidly dropping temperatures.

The chopper returned in twenty minutes and Bruce Albert was the first to be plucked off the avalanche slope. We had dug out an area in the snow where we could covey together, hold on to each other, and help each other with the hookups. We hooked Bruce up first and gave the lift signal. Bruce got about five feet above us and then came crashing down with his pack in our midst. Something had gone wrong and the helicopter sharply veered off, aborting the attempt. We radioed the helicopter, hearing only broken transmissions over our iced-up radio. The cable had broken and they did not have a second cable. All of our equipment was on board. We were on an avalanche slope without ice axes, picks, or other needed supplies. The thought of dropping the equipment was out of the question because the snow was too deep. I had planned on being at the wreckage for only a few hours and my Levis were already wet and iced over. My gloves were soaked and my fingers burned fiercely.

We knew, or at least I knew, that I would not be able to survive the cold night dug into the avalanche at that altitude. We decided to traverse the avalanche slope to the south ridge. Going across the seventy degree slope was slow. We roped up, keeping about twenty feet between us and using our only ice axe in the lead. The top snow level was about three feet deep with a flooring of ice from a previous freeze, but the flooring was weak or non-existent in some places, a phenomenon known as "holes." We yelled "hole" when any of us broke through, warning the others of our plight and alerting them to tighten up on the rope. Frequently, I would find myself chest or neck deep in a hole and still sinking. Sometimes I was fortunate enough to find myself standing on top of a pine tree buried beneath the deep snows. Digging oneself and others out of the holes was very tedious, time-consuming hard work that required an exacting approach. Crossing the avalanche area to the south ridge some 400 yards away involved encounters with more than 15 holes.

The south ridge was a false hope for safety as we could see that we had two more potential avalanche slopes to traverse. Hope did come, however, when the helicopter advised us via radio that they had found suitable landing at a 7,500 foot elevation plateau. The traversing across three avalanche slopes and two ridges from 13,000 feet to 7,500 feet during darkness without equipment is a dangerous attempt. To stop is certain death.

I began to feel the effects of hypothermia as we neared the end of the second avalanche slope. My thoughts began to wander and the other symptoms were present to some degree. I lost my footing and fell, and could feel myself sliding down the slope head first. As I jabbed both of my arms deep into the snow, the sliding ceased, but I watched our only radio cascade down the slope knowing we would not be able to retrieve it.

On the final ridge I could see the lights of the chopper some 2,000 feet below us. The effects of hypothermia were becoming more pronounced, and I wasn't sure whether I could make it to the helicopter or not. Search members were asking me questions now in order to assess my condition. I knew that as long as I could remember my address I was okay. I fell again, head first into deep snow. I was disoriented and was unable to tell if I was digging upward or downward. I waited in the darkness for the others to dig me out.

The last 2,000 yards to the helicopter was the hardest. I had to physically pick each leg up using my hands to place the leg in the next track. I fell frequently and needed rest more often. Stopping to look at the lights of the helicopter, I concentrated on the physically exhausting chore of taking one step at a time. I wanted to stop and sleep but I knew that meant giving up life. My legs were hurting badly, but I kept at my laboriously slow pace. I knew that my fingers and legs were frostbitten; they were beyond the pain that accompanies frostbite at the onset. Looking up, I saw the chopper just a few yards ahead, quietly waiting on the plateau in the moonlight. The craft's running lights symbolized all the glowing warmth and security of a Christmas tree.

They helped me aboard the helicopter giving me oxygen, coffee, and warm blankets. I was glad that I had the fortitude to do it; I had made it on my own. The hypothermia and the frostbite on my fingers and legs will go away. The experience never will. □

Cottonwood

1 HOUR PROCESSING
NOW IN BISHOP

WILSON'S FAST PHOTO

"WE USE KODAK PAPER FOR A GOOD LOOK"

Mammoth Village Pharmacy
Mammoth Lakes, CA. 93546
619) 934-8561

Wilson's Family Pharmacy
Bishop, CA. 93514
(619) 873-8451

BREAKFAST **SALADS**

BURGER KING®

HOME OF THE WHOPPER ®

COTTONWOOD PLAZA
785 N. MAIN STREET
BISHOP, CA 93514

SAFEWAY CENTER
CORNER OF MERIDIAN &
OLD MAMMOTH ROAD
MAMMOTH LAKES, CA.

The Insurancenter℠

Eastern Sierra Insurance Service, Inc.

Now, you don't need to have two separate policies to cover your home and car.

When you team-up with The Insurancenter - right here in our community - you can get *better* home and car protection in one policy. For what you're probably paying now with other policies, you can get *more coverage* in *one* policy. We call it PCP!

COTTONWOOD PLAZA P.O. BOX 1508
BISHOP CA. 93514 (619) 873-8984

Wilson's Card and Gift Shop

Hallmark

Hallmark and Paper Moon Greeting Cards

Complete Pharmaceutical Services

Russell Stover Candies

Fine blown glass gifts
famous maker cosmetics
and a large toy selection

The most complete magazine selection in the Owens Valley
Wilson's Fast Photo Finishing (Same Day Service)
On your Color Print Film Developing

ON NORTH MAIN STREET IN BISHOP, CALIFORNIA

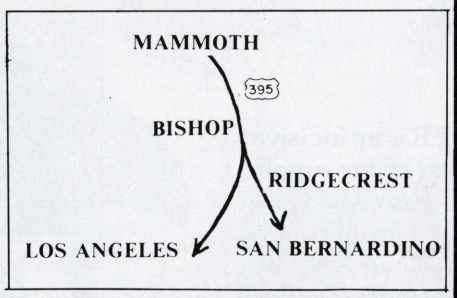
Plaza

CORNY'S SHOE STORE

"SPECIALIZING IN COLD WEATHER BOOTS SINCE 1949"

MasterCard VISA

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S COLD WEATHER BOOTS



COTTONWOOD PLAZA
BISHOP, CA.

801 N. CHINA LAKE BLVD.
RIDGECREST, CA.

SKI BUSES WELCOME

HICKORY HOLLOW

"Gourmet Sandwiches"

Roast Beef
Corned Beef
Pepper Beef
Ham
Turkey
Pastrami
Salami

Mayonnaise - Mustard -
Lettuce - Tomatoes -
Bean Sprouts - Pepperoncini

American - Swiss - Jack -
Provolone

'ITS THE BIGGEST ITS THE BEST!

(619) 873-8300

OPEN DAILY

敍香園

IMPERIAL GOURMET

CHINESE RESTAURANT

AND FOOD TO GO

NOW OFFERING **SUNDAY BRUNCH 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.**

ALL YOU CAN EAT FOR $4.95 (one glass of champagne included)

HAPPY HOUR - MONDAY - FRIDAY 5 to 7

SEAFOOD ENTREES

LOBSTER, CRAB, SCALLOPS & FISH

EARLY BIRD SPECIAL

Monday thru Thursday

FROM 4:30 to 6:00 p.m.

$4.95

785 N. MAIN BISHOP, CA. 872-1144

A COOL DEAL

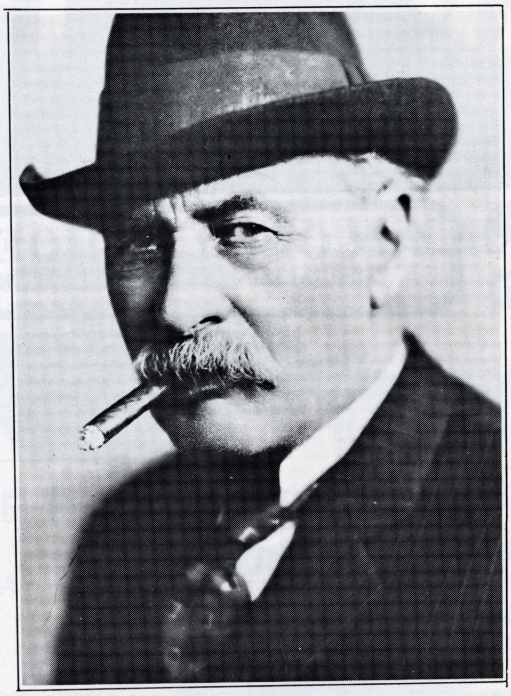
BASKIN-ROBBINS

31 ¢

FOR A JUNIOR SCOOP
WITH COUPON

VALID THRU FEB '86
BISHOP STORE ONLY

WATER AND POWER



Los Angeles Department of Water & Power photo

William Mulholland, head of the Los Angeles water department, was the heart and soul of the Owens Valley Aqueduct plan. He dominated the city's water policies for decades.

William Kahrl's WATER AND POWER is an incisive history of the conflict over Los Angeles' water supply in the Owens Valley. The book, published by University of California Press, offers new insights into many facets of the still-controversial subject. By special arrangement, SIERRA LIFE presents a series of excerpts from this brilliant retelling of the story.

When William E. Smythe, first executive secretary of the National Irrigation Congress, editor of *Irrigation Age*, and author of the seminal history of the American reclamation movement, *The Conquest of Arid America*, surveyed the prospects for economic development in California in 1900, he saw no future for Los Angeles and the other communities of the South Coast. . . Instead, he looked to the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada—to what he called the Undiscovered California, Plumas, Lassen, and Modoc counties in the north and the Owens Valley in the south—as the areas holding special promise for the state's future economic growth.

Smythe argued that these emerging communities, although isolated during the nineteenth century by the absence of railroad facilities connecting them to the major cities of the coast, "present today the finest field for development in California and one of the finest in the United States. There can be no question that during the next century they will become the homes of hundreds of thousands of people and the seat of a manifold industrial life." His confidence was founded on the abundant water resources these areas naturally possessed. His optimism with regard to the Owens Valley in particular was shared by other western advocates of systematic irrigation and by the federal engineers responsible for expanding agricultural development of the West under the aegis of the newly formed United States Reclamation Service. But in Los Angeles, William Mulholland looked to the water riches of the Owens Valley and drew an altogether different conclusion, one which would set him on a course in direct conflict with the public forces then gathering to aid the economic development of the valley.

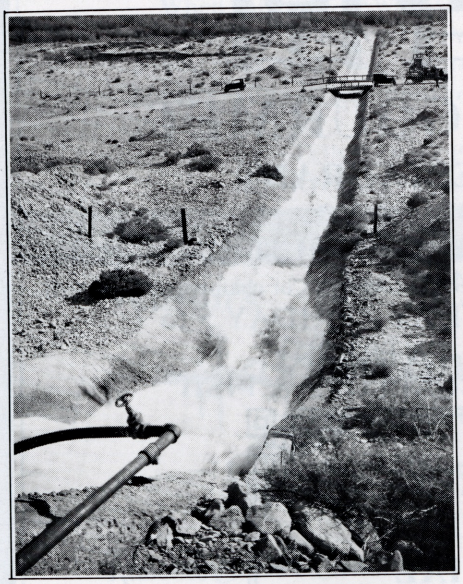


Photo courtesy of the Eastern California Museum, the Ramsey collection

The (Owens) Valley is a narrow graben, approximately 100 miles long and an average of 5 miles wide, confined on the east by the Inyo-White Mountains and on the west by the Sierra Nevada, which rises above the valley's floor. More than one and a half million years ago, when the vast granite blocks that form the modern Sierra Nevada first pressed upward, they carried the valley with them, lifting it to an elevation of nine thousand feet before it broke away and fell back to its present level. As they subsided, the blocks forming the valley's floor twisted together, sealing the basin and closing its lower-lying southern end with pinched

The Alabama Gates (above) were later seized by angry Owens Valley ranchers. *Los Angeles Department of Water & Power photo*

bedrock. When particles of rock and soil were washed down the mountainsides in the thousands of centuries that followed, they were consequently captured in this watertight basin, forming alluvial fans of granitic soil which eventually covered over 275 square miles of the area between Owens Lake and the present site of Bishop. The mountains are thus the source of all the valley's richness, for they have provided both the soil that fills the valley today and the water to make it fertile. . .

Although white trappers and explorers had passed through the Owens Valley as early as 1833, there was no detailed written account of what they found there until 1859. In July of that year, Capt. J.W. Davidson entered the valley with a military column sent out from Fort Tejon to investigate charges that the Paiutes had been rustling cattle in the Santa Clara and San Fernando valleys. Proceeding north from Owens Lake, Davidson followed a river averaging fifty feet in width and running fifteen to twenty feet deep. "Every step now taken shows you that nature has been lavish of her stores," Davidson wrote. "The mountains are filled with timber, the vallies with water and meadows of luxuriant grass. Some of these meadows contain, at a moderate estimate, ten thousand acres, every foot of which can be irrigated." North of Oak Creek he noted, "Wherever water touches it, it produces abundantly. I should think it well suited to the growth of wheat, barley, oats, rye and various fruits, the apple, pear, etc. . . . To the Grazier, this is one of the finest parts of the State; to the Farmer, it offers every advantage but a market."

The three fathers of the aqueduct, left to right: Joseph B. Lippincott, Fred Eaton, and Mulholland. Lippincott, an engineer for the U.S. Reclamation Service, used his position to further the city's plan. *Photo courtesy of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power*

(Fred) Eaton's advocacy of (the Los Angeles water system) had been tied to a scheme of his own to bring the waters of the Owens Valley to Los Angeles. This was an idea he had borrowed from two private surveys performed in 1885 and 1891 which had shown it would be technically possible to construct a canal running 235 miles between the two regions in which water would flow entirely by gravity. Eaton had been promoting the idea with Mulholland and anyone else who would listen since 1892, but no one had paid much attention. Although the Reclamation Service had heard of the scheme, officials in Washington dismissed it as just another of the dozens of plans for bringing water to Los Angeles—"most of them chimerical"—that self-proclaimed experts in the South Coast had been producing for years. "Almost every possible or impossible solution for the water problem had been brought to the attention of the Geological Survey or the Reclamation Service at one time or another," wrote (the Service's) Arthur Powell Davis. . . Although Davis acknowledged that the survey's experts had examined Eaton's plan "in a more or less desultory way," he noted that "on the face of it, such a project is as likely as the City of Washington tapping the Ohio River. . . "

(Eaton) persuaded his former protege Mulholland to return with him to the Owens Valley so that Mulholland could at least look over the resources of the area before it was too late and the water was committed to agriculture. Mulholland by this time had completed his studies of alternative water supplies the city might secure within its immediate area, and the results had not been encouraging. After examining the prospects for tapping Piru Creek in Ventura County and the Kern, Santa Ana, Mojave, and San Luis Rey rivers, Mulholland had concluded that all were either too small or already tied down by preexisting water rights claims to augment the water department's efforts to supply the city's growing population. He agreed, therefore, to examine Eaton's proposal, which he had dismissed many times before.

It became a standing joke among the work crews along the line of the aqueduct in later years that they could trace the path Eaton and Mulholland had cut across the desert by following the trail of empty liquor bottles the two men left in their wake.

Together the two men set out for the Owens Valley by buckboard, traveling in secret and camping out along the way. The trip was not all hardship, though: it became a standing joke among the work crews along the line of the aqueduct in later years that they could trace the path Eaton and Mulholland had cut across the desert by following the trail of empty liquor bottles the two men left in their wake. Once in the valley, Eaton was successful in convincing Mulholland

that here lay a water supply capable of supporting a population of two million—ten times the number of people Los Angeles then contained. Mulholland returned to the city to confer with the members of the municipal water board while Eaton headed East to consult with Dillon and Hubbard, bond attorneys in New York, in a last fruitless attempt to form a private consortium to buy up water rights in the Owens Valley.

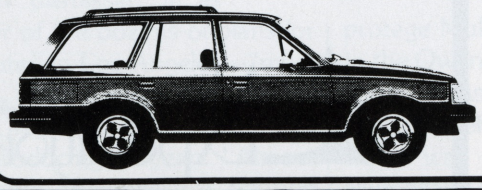
Mulholland ultimately resorted to exaggerations of the city's need for water as a way of encouraging voters to approve his bonds (for the aqueduct), and, in the weeks before the election, the *(Los Angeles) Times* began to print almost daily predictions of the dire consequences which would be visited on Los Angeles if the aqueduct were not built. One of the most enduring stories fabricated as part of this scare campaign involved the so-called drought which descended on Southern California at a time variously cited as 1892 or 1895 and which reportedly persisted until 1904. Modern historians still refer to this drought even though it seems to have originated with Mulholland in the election of 1905. For example, Erwin Cooper's *Aqueduct Empire* recalls on Mulholland's authority that the average rainfall in Los Angeles from 1895 to 1904 dropped to only six inches per year; in fact, National Weather Bureau records reveal that Los Angeles' annual precipitation in this period averaged 11.52 inches. Similarly, Remi Nadeau in his history of the Los Angeles aqueduct reports that Mulholland first traveled to the Owens Valley in September 1904 because that summer's "water famine" had set the city "reeling." In fact, Los Angeles in 1904 received a perfectly average rainfall of 11.88 inches and in August experienced a record downpour for that month which was not even approached in the entire forty-year period from 1891 to 1930.

Mary Austin was the wife of Stafford Wallace Austin, the register of federal lands in Independence. . . As an author, she had established for herself a stature far surpassing that of her husband. The appearance in 1903 of her *Land of Little Rain*, a collection of word sketches of life on the high desert lands of the Owens Valley, had won her wide acclaim in Europe and America and established her reputation as a major figure on the American literary scene. Articulate, imperious, and extraordinarily gifted, she became, in Carl Van Doren's words, a "matriarch in a desert" who "had again more mind than her daily existence could occupy. It was the surplus which made her poet and

YEAR-ROUND
ALPINE ADVENTURES
Winter skiing or
summer mountaineering.
What's your idea of fun? A leisurely high country ski tour? Or an exciting ski traverse in remote and rugged mountains?
Professional guides & instructors.
Our purpose - to help you experience the joys of ski touring and to relate our knowledge in a warm imaginative way - whether you happen to be a novice or an expert.
Share with us
the alpine experience.
Join us on one of our alpine adventures. We promise to make your trip pleasant and rewarding. Let us be your host, and share together the freedom, the challenge, and the wonders of the mountains.
Alpine Expeditions
presented by:
Sierra Nevada Alpine Guides
P.O. Box 1781
Bishop, CA 93514
(619) 873-5617

Hourly Ski Reports
Road and Weather
KMMT
106.3 FM STEREO
MAMMOTH LAKES, CA.
BRIDGEPORT 107.7
BIG PINE 102.3
ROCK
POP
JAZZ
TOP FORTY
24 HOURS A DAY
Sierra Night Life
and Local Events

Season's Best Wishes
Miller
MADE
THE AMERICAN WAY
GILLESPIE DISTRIBUTING
486 E. LINE ST. BISHOP, CA. (619) 872-6931

FORD
RENTALS
AS LOW AS $35.00 PER DAY
(619) 873-4291

FALS
FORD AUTHORIZED LEASING SYSTEM
WEEKLY INSURANCE RATES AVAILABLE
EASTERN SIERRA MOTORS 1440 N. HWY 6 BISHOP, CA

prophet. . . The desert put its mark on her. . . Her desert knowledge ripened to a wisdom that formed and colored all her later experience. . . Her books were wells driven into America to bring up water for her countrymen, though they might not have realized their thirst." Seeing the valley threatened by Los Angeles' plans in 1905, she joined her husband in leading a defense of the country where her talents had matured. . .

Modest, intellectual, gentlemanly, and ineffectually ambitious, Wallace brought Mary to Lone Pine in 1896, where he and his brother hoped to found an irrigation colony. "Mary at 26 was far too desperately displaced from the true center of her being not to feel obliged to go somewhere." The project was a total failure, and the couple was turned out of the hotel where they were living, even though Mary was by then carrying a child. Wallace found a cabin near George's Creek, and there the baby, Ruth, was born retarded. Mary, her health failing, fled first to Bishop, where she taught at the private Inyo Academy, and then to Los Angeles, where she worked with (Los Angeles city librarian Charles) Lummis.

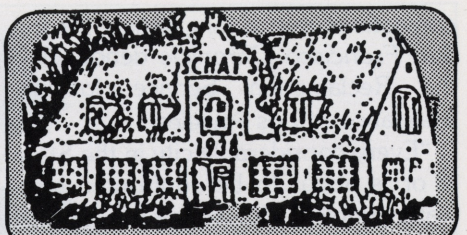
When Wallace obtained his appointment at the land office in Independence she joined him once again, and it was here that her writing skill began to blossom. . . With her affection for the Indians, her often distracted manner, and her liberal enthusiasm for women's suffrage, free silver, and juvenile court reform, she seems never to have fit in well with the more conventional white farming families who were settling the Owens Valley in increasing numbers by the turn of the century. Many of the neighboring wives later recalled with horror rushing to Mary's house at night after hearing Ruth cry for hours, only to find the child strapped into a chair screaming while her mother paced the floor, hair streaming down her back, composing some new bit of writing.

Life in the Owens Valley was rapidly changing in those years. "With the slow decline of mining, agricultural possiblities came to the fore. . . and there between the old era and the new the Valley hung," she later wrote. Everyone who came there seemed filled with an expectation of impending

Mary Austin first called public attention to the Owens Valley's objection to the city's project. "By God, that woman is the only one who has brains enough to see where this is going," Mulholland said.

prosperity. "This was an attitude prevailing among men of Inyo; one on which they constantly reassured one another. *Something* was due to happen soon," she observed. "Once they had exposed themselves to it, they spent their lives going around and around in it, always keyed to the expected, the releasing discovery." Wallace Austin had certainly been infected by this spirit, and it seems to have deepened the gulf between them. The more time she spent walking in the desert and writing about what she found there, the further apart they became. . .

And so, when the occasion arose to make a common cause with Wallace against Los Angeles' aqueduct, she threw herself into the effort, perhaps as much to save her marriage as to preserve the Owens Valley. She went to Los Angeles, where she interviewed Mulholland and came away with the conviction that, despite his protestations to the contrary, construction of the aqueduct would mean the end of all the dreams Wallace and the other men of Inyo nurtured for a future of prosperity and growth in the valley. "By God, that woman is the only one who has brains enough to see where this is going!" Mulholland exclaimed after she had gone. She poured all of her findings and



Erick Schat's

DUTCH BAKERIES

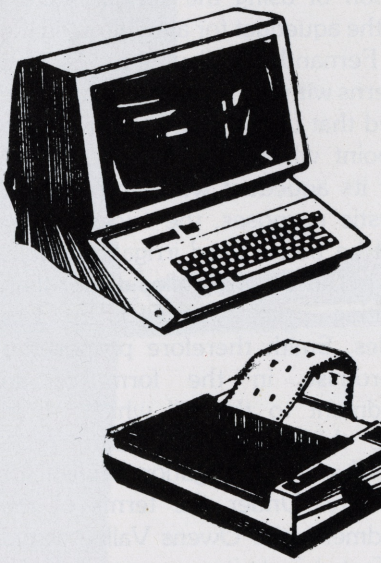
HOME OF THE ONLY ORIGINAL

SHEEPHERDER BREAD ®

Fresh breads baked daily in our exclusive Stone Hearth Oven!
763 MAIN ST., BISHOP, CALIF.
(619) 873-7156

COMPLETE COMPUTERIZED BOOKKEEPING SERVICES

JOE KENNINGTON, DBA



SWENSON'S BUSINESS SERVICES

INYO AND MONO COUNTIES AND TONOPAH, NEVADA

136 WHITNEY ALLEY, BISHOP

(619) 873-6166

convictions into a long article for the *San Francisco Chronicle* denouncing the Reclamation Service for its assistance to Los Angeles:

"Every considerable city in the State is or is about to be confronted by a water problem. But what is to be gained by the commonwealth if it robs Peter to pay Paul? Is all this worthwhile in order that Los Angeles should be just so big?. . . It is worthwhile for other cities to consider that as this case proceeds their own water problems are likely to be shaped by it more or less. Shall the question of domestic water in California be determined by craft and graft and bitterness and long-drawn wasteful struggles, or conducted with rightness and dignity to an equal conclusion?. . . Heaven send in the interests of decent government that they will not make good the boast of the promoters (of the aqueduct) to have their private ears. In a republic, government is not supposed to have a private ear."

In keeping with the attitude (Wallace) Austin had first enunciated, (congressman for Inyo County Sylvester C.) Smith acknowledged Los Angeles' need for an additional domestic water supply. It was on the question of using the surplus waters from the aqueduct for agriculture in the San Fernando Valley that Smith's concerns with the bill were directed. He argued that until the city had grown to the point where it could use all the water its aqueduct would provide for domestic purposes, the excess water would be better used irrigating public lands in the Owens Valley rather than benefiting private interests in Los Angeles. Smith therefore proposed a compromise in the form of an amendment to the bill which would enable the Reclamation Service to proceed with its irrigation project for the valley. Under the terms of the amendment, the Owens Valley would have first claim to its own water supply. Any water left over after the valley's needs had been met could be diverted to Los Angeles, but only to serve the city's domestic needs. And any excess water the city could not use would revert to the valley's control. . .

Mulholland traveled to Washington to meet the challenge. The predominating influence of the local business community in Los Angeles' public affairs in general and the aqueduct in particular was evident in the fact that he took with him, in addition to the city attorney, the president of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce and the chairman of the chamber's investigating committee, which had endorsed the aqueduct in the critical closing days of the bond election. Finding that Smith's proposal enjoyed the support of the Secretary of the Interior, Mulholland initially agreed to accept the amendment in a meeting he had with Smith and (California Senator Frank) Flint on June 21, 1906. Senator Flint, however, was not so ready to concede defeat, and he turned for assistance to President Roosevelt's close personal friend and chief of the Forest Service, Gifford Pinchot. On the night of June 23, Flint obtained an audience with Roosevelt, and with Pinchot's help he succeeded in convincing Roosevelt to oppose the Smith compromise. Hitchcock and Smith did not learn of this turn of events until June 25, when Roosevelt, despite their strenuous protests, sent a formal request to the House Public Lands Committee asking that the Smith amendment be removed. The committee reported Flint's bill out the next day drawn according to the president's instructions, and the House promptly approved. On June 28, five days after Flint's first late-night call, the bill went to the president's desk for signature.

Roosevelt's decision to side with Los Angeles and the special interests which stood to profit from the city's scheme to exploit the water of a small agricultural community would seem to mark a significant lapse in policy for a president who is remembered today as a trustbuster, friend of the little man, and early champion of the modern conservation movement.

At first, there was some concern that the city would never be able to find enough skilled workers to construct the project. A fortuitous financial panic originating in the eastern markets in October 1907, however, brought about the closure of scores of mining operations in the western states just as construction on the aqueduct was getting under way. As a result, more than four thousand trained tunnelers and diggers from the gold fields of California, Nevada, and Colorado suddenly became available. Some were over fifty years old and had worked the original Comstock Lode. Nevertheless, anyone who needed a job found a welcome on the aqueduct, which operated under special provisions waiving the city's usual civil service requirements for all but supervisory positions. Americans of Greek, Austrian, Serbian, Montenegran, Hungarian, and Italian extraction made up the labor force. Japanese and Chinese workers were rare. Most numerous of all the ethnic groups were Irish-Americans, who arrived in dungarees held up with a bit of fuse tied for a belt, hobnailed boots, and derby hats which could absorb the impact of a falling rock in this age before the introduction of hard hats.

The conditions under which these men worked were demanding in the extreme. Temperatures in the desert ranged from 10 degrees Fahrenheit at night to more than 110 during the day. Those who chose to work in the tunnels, where the temperature remained constant, faced the constant danger of falling rock and cave-ins. With the exception of the cement plant at Monolith, where the city employed 250 men, the buildings in the camps did little to protect workers from the elements. Most structures were built of wood and canvas so that they could be moved easily; only the equipment storage sheds merited corrugated iron. Insulation was rare and refrigeration altogether unknown. The meat in the commissaries was usually rotten and maggot-ridden, and eggs and cheese arrived in an inedible condition.

The Los Angeles Young Men's Christian Association did its best to lighten the worker's lot with regular shipments of books, magazines, games, movies, and bags of candy sent to the club rooms it established in the work camps. Nevertheless, few men could stand exposure to these conditions for long. As a result, the work force was constantly fluctuating. As many as one

Theodore Roosevelt talks to Gifford Pinchot, head of the U.S. Forest Service. Pinchot helped convince Roosevelt to side with Los Angeles against the Owens Valley. *Forest Service Photo Collection, National Agricultural Library*

The intake to the aqueduct *Los Angeles Department of Water & Power photo*

hundred thousand men worked on the aqueduct, but the labor force never numbered more than six thousand at a time, and three thousand was the average. A general exodus from the camps occurred each summer as the men fled the Mojave Desert to find work in the Northwest or on the other side of the Sierra; when winter returned, the aqueduct labor force swelled again. For shorter respites, each man would save up a small stake of cash and head for Los Angeles; few got past the saloons that sprang up in the towns of Cinco and Mojave, however, and alcoholism became an acute problem in the camps at the southern end of the project.

Health and sanitary conditions were primitive, though no worse than was customary for the period. The hundreds of men working the Saugus Division, for example, had only one bathtub among them, and when it wore out from constant use it was not replaced. All employees contributed to the cost of medical care. If a worker was injured but did not require hospitalization, he was allowed to return to work once he signed a release absolving the city of Los Angeles of any liability for subsequent complications. Those who did go into the camp hospitals received no pay at all unless they signed similar waivers, in which case they were provided with free board and half pay. Settlements for the survivors of men killed on the project were rarely paid and never generous. Of the forty-three deaths that occurred during construction of the aqueduct, only eight resulted in the payment of benefits to survivors. The total paid to these eight families was no more than $3,928, and only three of the eight received cash settlements greater than $500. The city of Los Angeles did contribute $75 automatically toward the burial expenses of anyone killed on the project. . .

Sheriff Charles A. Collins warned that if two men were indicted, two hundred would step forward to stand with them. Governor Richardson urged Collins to demonstrate his "manhood and courage."

On November 16, (1924, the Owens Valley ranchers seized) the Alabama Gates, which control the main flow of water into the aqueduct. The gates were shut and the water sent spilling back into the river bed. Mark Watterson, who led the assault, was joined at the gates over the next four days by crowds of five hundred to eight hundred valley residents. It was a festive event. Businesses throughout the valley closed as shopowners left to join their friends at the aqueduct. Families came with picnic lunches. And the movie star Tom Mix, who was shooting a film nearby, sent over an orchestra.

Local law enforcement authorities were powerless to intervene. When Los Angeles demanded that the leaders of the insurrection be arrested, Sheriff Charles A. Collins warned that if two men were indicted, two hundred would step forward to stand with them. Instead Collins called upon Governor Friend W. Richardson to send in state troops, arguing that guardsmen were the only authority the unarmed mob would be likely to obey. Richardson demurred and urged Collins instead to demonstrate his "manhood and courage.

The pressure on the city was immense. News reports of events at the Alabama Gates were reprinted around the world. The judge sitting in Mulholland's suit to block the ranchers' diversions withdrew, declaring that he could no longer take an objective and dispassionate view of the city's case. The Los Angeles papers at first denounced the Wattersons as mobsters and printed false stories linking them with the Ku Klux Klan which even their own correspondents denounced. But they were alone in their defense of Mulholland's policy. "If the people of Los Angeles knew what their political agents were doing in Owens Valley they would be fired," declared Harry Glasscock in a statement that gained wide circulation.

On November 18, the *Los Angeles Times* deserted Mulholland in an editorial noting that the ranchers were not anarchists but honest citizens of the hardy stock of pioneers who had made California great: "They have put themselves hopelessly in the wrong by

A gathering at the Alabama Gates *Eastern California Museum, the Ramsey collection*

taking the law into their own hands, but that is not to say that there has not been a measure of justice on their side of the argument." In the view of the *Times*, the need for an amicable settlement was clear, and it called upon the Public Service Commission to pay for the suffering its policies had caused. "It is not a time to drive the hardest possible bargain," the *Times* concluded. "The city can afford to be liberal in its settlement with these pioneers whose work of half a century it will undo." As the *Literary Digest* observed, "The reputation of Los Angeles for decent dealing throughout the entire country now hangs in the balance."

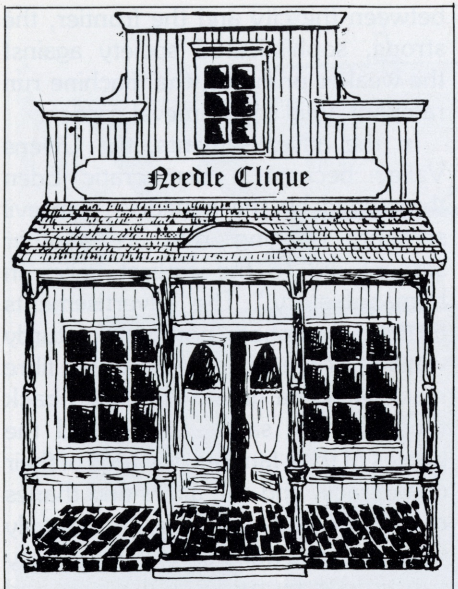
Mulholland's public relations efforts had accomplished nothing in the way of eroding the popular view of the Owens Valley as the victim of the city's aggression. "Remember the Owens Valley" became the slogan under which rural and north state legislators rallied to defeat both a reapportionment bill designed to increase Los Angeles' political representation in 1924 and the enabling act for the Metropolitan Water District in 1925. The example of Los Angeles' exploitation of the Owens Valley's water resources meanwhile encouraged popular support for direct state intervention in the management of California's water resources. The *Santa Barbara Press* voiced an increasingly widespread concern when it warned, "Other communities in California will sooner or later find themselves in the same predicament unless some agency tackles the task of conserving the waters of the state which now go to waste or which are now not utilized as fully as possible."...

Although they were extreme examples of the purple rhetoric popular in journalistic prose of the period, the (Owens Valley Property Owners Protective Association) advertisements together with the *Sacramento Union* articles marked a sophisticated departure from the appeals of old. Gone were the fatal associations with the interests of private power companies and the unpopular opposition to "hysterical conservationism" which had proved so detrimental to the valley's interest in the past. Instead, these articles found more common strains with which to sound the heartstrings of their readers. They described an authentic American tragedy, rich with Biblical overtones, which touched one of America's fondest cultural themes: conflict between the city and the frontier, the strong, sophisticated society against the weaker primitive, the machine run rampant amid the primeval garden.

In the advertisements, the Owens Valley became a democratic Eden threatened by the aqueduct, "an evil serpent, bringing ruin as another serpent did to the earliest valley in human history." The advertisements further described how "the sturdy winners of the wilderness, whose fibre made America great. . . pushed back the disputing sands and reared the homes of their families, the halls of their democracy, and the altars and thanes of their God—until happy, lovely Owens Valley was a fairyland of beauty surrounded by peaks and desert and dotted with monuments to human industry."

Through this frontier paradise the *Union* stories followed "the trail of the wreckers," presenting "a record of political ownership run rabid, the record of a great city which raised itself above the law." Here the *Union* watched the destruction of the fruit orchards by city tractors: "Shame-faced Los Angeles removing the traces of civilization in the hope that the future will not curse her." There the *Union* found an abandoned schoolhouse with flag still flying, "Its blood-red stripes now twined and twisted with the halyard. . . tired of neglect. . . the last thing to yield to the decree of abandonment." Mulholland was presented throughout as the cruelest of villains, chief architect of "a policy of ruthlessness, of 'sink without trace,' of brutality and sharp practice which leads crooks to jail or makes them fugitives from justice." When asked by the *Union* what justice he felt was due to the Owens Valley ranchers, Mulholland was quoted in reply, "Justice! Why there are not enough trees in the valley to give the_____(sic) justice!"

Water and Power by William Kahrl, 608 pages, illustrated.
$24.95 Clothbound, $10.95 Paperback
Published by University of California Press. The book may be ordered directly from:
University of California Press
2120 Berkeley Way
Berkeley, CA 94720
(800) 822-6657



NEEDLEPOINT
CROCHET COTTON
YARNS

Needle Clique

(619) 873-6169
169 SHORT ST. BISHOP CA.

SINCE 1976

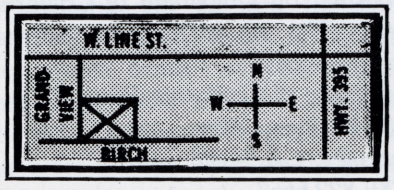
mom's
Furniture & Flooring

"you'll like MOM's price better"

"Serving Inyo-Mono Counties
& Central Nevada Since 1976"

Visit our 10,000 sq. ft. Showroom
Full of Quality Furniture &
Flooring at the "Best Price!"

2957 E. Birch Bishop, CA. 93514
872-4841



Walker stands at the summit of Mount Powell (above). Carter catches air (below).

Redline continued

easily have spent weeks on any section of the trip and been fulfilled.

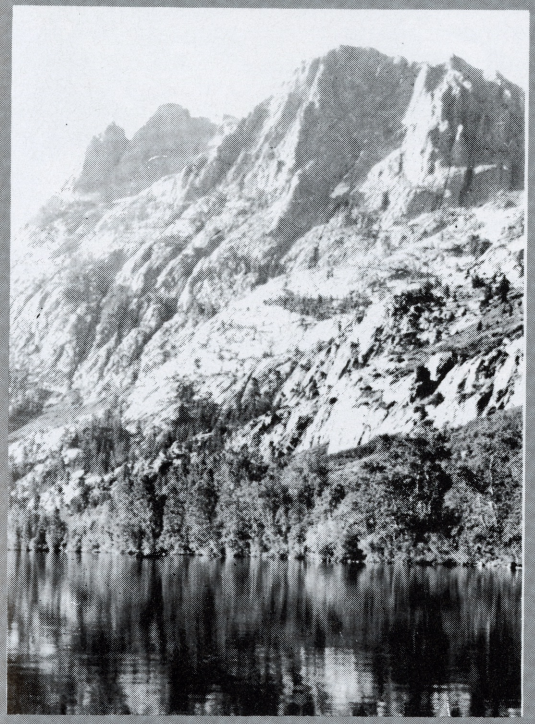
The Redline was a risky endeavor that challenged us in a most exhilarating location. To be romantic, we had traveled to many of the world's silent cordilleras in search of skiing's highest adventures, and it seemed ironic that here, in one of the gentlest ranges on earth, we had found it.

On our last day, high above the village of Mammoth, we simultaneously pushed off the final pass and skied turn after turn, dropping down the steep rock-lined chutes and bowls. We laughed, rejoicing together and alone sharing the freedom of the open slopes.

Can this pleasure be measured in thousands of feet or numbers of turns or the breadth of our smiles? Our joy ran like a current between us, a product of that whimsical flying feeling that *is* skiing. The freedom of skiing in the high mountains filled us as we looked back up the bowls to the crest. The Redline was the most fantastic tour we had ever done and was something we had always wanted to do—take a long low-level flight over the Sierra crest. □

Allan Bard and Tom Carter own Alpine Expeditions, a mountaineering guide service based in Bishop. They also are the editors of the Eastern Sierra Ski News.

JUNE LAKE



ski JUNE & MAMMOTH MOUNTAINS

MIDWEEK SPECIAL **$35.** COUPLE

LAKE FRONT CABINS

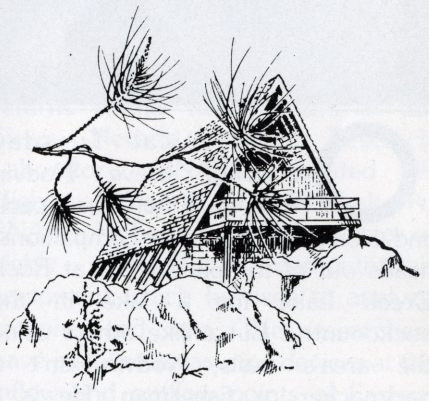
(619) 648-7527 P.O. Box 87 June Lake, CA 93529

RAINBOW RIDGE
CONDOMINIUM RESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT CO.
(800) 462-5589

JUNE LAKE VILLAGER MOTEL
BIG ROCK RESORT
BIRCH CREEK CONDOS
SIERRA SUNS CONDOS
INTERLAKEN CONDOS
EDGEWATER CONDOS

Fern Creek Lodge

Modern Housekeeping Cabins — Fireplace & TV
1, 2 and 4 Bedrooms at Last Year's Rates
Call Toll-free (800) 621-9146
or (619) 648-7722
At the base of June Mountain — Open All Year
Grocery Store, Cafe, Propane, Union 76, Deli, Laundromat
Route 3, Box 7, June Lake, California 93529



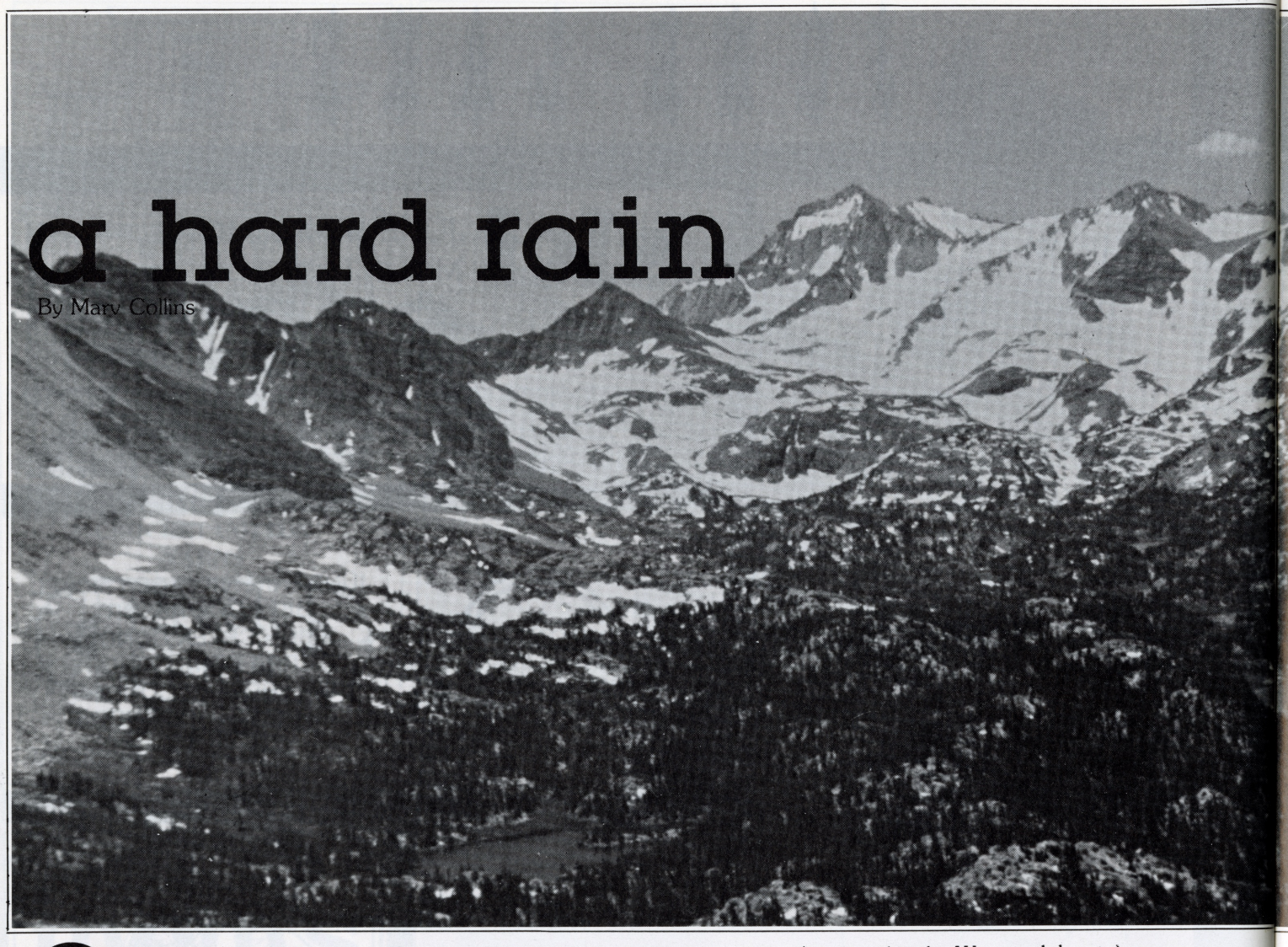
Whispering Pines

MID—WEEK SPECIALS SAVE $$$
ANY MID-WEEK NIGHT
$35 -2 persons-
COMPLETE HOUSEKEEPING UNITS

PHONE (619) 648-7762
STAR ROUTE 3, BOX 14-B
JUNE LAKE CA. 93529

a hard rain

By Marv Collins



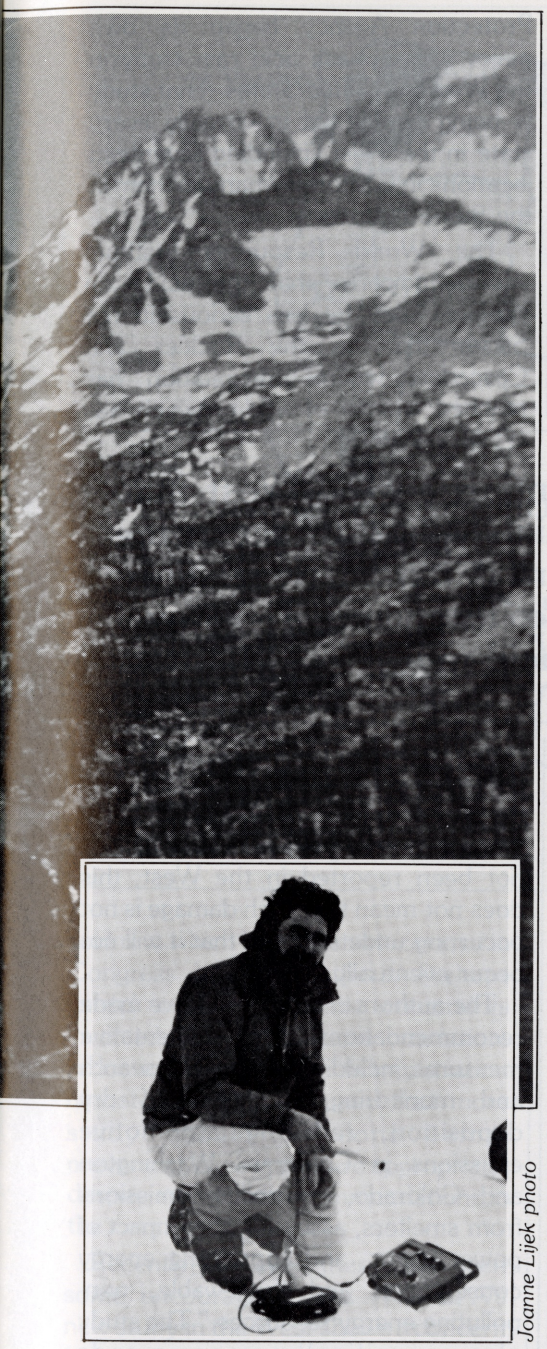
On a typical Tuesday morning, Steve Nodvin picks up a hefty backpack and, along with one or two companions, heads out of the parking lot at Rock Creek Lake for a lake in the backcountry. But unlike others using the area's trails, Nodvin isn't a backpacker or fisherman. He is a research scientist from the University of California at Riverside collecting data and water samples here, part of a study aimed ultimately at determining the effects of acid rain on lakes throughout the Sierra Nevada region.

Concern has grown in recent months about the potential for future damage to ecosystems in the Western United States from acid rain, and the Sierra has been singled out as a potential trouble area. Acid rain damage to lakes and forests in several parts of the East, in some cases severe, has already been documented. Attention is now turning to the possibility for future problems in

A report released by the World Resources Institute last spring entitled *The American West's Acid Test*, co-authored by a group of scientists including John Harte of the University of California at Berkeley, was the first widely circulated report to warn about the potential for damage to ecosystems in the West from acid precipitation. The report concludes that lakes and forests in three especially sensitive areas, the Sierra Nevada, Rocky, and Cascade Mountains, are "potentially at risk" from the effects of acid precipitation. The concern grew from studies which determined that acidic rainfall is being found in areas designated as sensitive because of a poor ability to buffer ecosystems from acidity. The report indicates that no biological damage has been found in the West so far, but that action is necessary on several fronts to prevent the kind of damage which has already occurred elsewhere. "The risks are real in the West and the stakes may be high," the report's authors caution.

The world's worst cases of acid rain have occurred in Northern Europe and the Eastern part of North America. The phenomenon was first discovered in Scandinavia in the '50s, when scientists studying fish declines in lakes and rivers there found that the area's rainfall was more acidic than that of other locales. Eventually, the cause of that acidic rainfall was traced to pollution from industry and coal burning in Northern Germany. In Scandinavia today, thousands of lakes have acidified to the point that they are no longer capable of supporting aquatic life. In Germany, the historic Black Forest is undergoing a severe dieback, and is in danger of being literally destroyed. The value of trees which have already been lost in West Germany has been estimated at around $1.2 billion.

The Eastern United States began experiencing problems from acid rain in



Joanne Lijek photo

Research scientist Steve Nodvin does acid rain tests on frozen Eastern Brook Lake.

the '60s. Lakes in upstate New York, New England, and Canada have become measurably acidified, causing fish die-offs and other biological damage. There has been damage to forests in New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, Tennessee and parts of Canada attributed to acid rain, in combination with other products of air pollution.

Acid rain forms when nitrogen oxide, usually from automotive pollution, or sulfur dioxide, often from industrial pollution (and especially copper smelting), form nitric and sulfuric acids in the atmosphere which descend with precipitation. Because the pollution is atmospheric, there can be thousands of miles between the source of the pollution and the site where the acid precipitation occurs, as was found in Northern Europe. Correspondingly, the acid rain problem in the northeastern United States is thought to be caused in part by pollution from the Midwest.

One of the most serious effects of the acidification of lakes is the loss of fish populations. When a lake reaches an abnormally high level of acidity, fish stop reproducing. At the same time, fish have been found to be injured directly by acidified waters. Other biota, including invertebrates and amphibians, are also affected. Eventually, lakes may acidify to the point that they become biologically sterile.

The damage caused by acid rain is more complex than the direct effects of increased acidity in waters and soils; secondary effects do additional harm to vegetation and wildlife. Metals, especially aluminum, which occur naturally and abundantly in soils but are not toxic under normal circumstances, become more soluble in water with higher levels of acidity. Dissolved metals can reach levels which are toxic to fish and other aquatic life, and also to wildlife using the lake as a water source. Scientists also believe that the acid-induced mobilization of metals in soil may be a primary cause of damage to forests.

The term "acid rain" is in a way a misnomer. Potentially harmful levels of acidity have also been found in snow, which could become an important consideration in the Sierra, where a large percentage of precipitation is in the form of snowfall. Although snow in the Sierra has not been found to be strongly acidic so far, acid snow has caused particular problems elsewhere. When strongly acidic snow melts in the spring, it creates a "pulse" of acidity as it moves rapidly into an ecosystem, causing severe damage.

Also there is "dry deposition" of acids—those which descend in the form of gases, solids or aerosols. Dry deposition is very difficult to monitor, but is thought to perhaps make up a significant part of the "acid rain" problem in many areas.

Dr. Steve Nodvin came to the Sierra three years ago to begin his watershed study in the Rock Creek Basin, after working on acid rain studies in New England for several years. "Our project here was prompted by studies done in the late '70s and in 1980 which found that acidic rainfall was occurring in the Sierra," he says, "and that many lakes here were poorly buffered. One of the questions we're trying to answer is,'Could Sierra lakes become acidified in the future?' "

His project, which he conceived with Professors Lanny Lund and Al Page of U.C. Riverside and which is funded by Southern California Edison, focuses primarily on gathering baseline information about acid deposition here. The Eastern Brook Lakes Watershed in the Rock Creek Basin was chosen as the site of the project, both for its suitability from a scientific standpoint and because of practical considerations like accessibility and freedom from avalanche danger in wintertime. Nodvin and his assistants travel to the lake one day a week, year round, collecting data and samples for analysis. In the winter, the researchers must snowmobile for several miles and ski for a few more to reach the lake.

Once samples are collected, Nodvin returns to his headquarters at the Sierra Nevada Aquatic Research Laboratory (SNARL), located off Highway 395 north of Crowley Lake. At SNARL, he has assembled a cluster of highly sophisticated, computerized equipment which he uses to analyze samples and data. The researchers have installed measuring devices at the inflow and outflow points of Eastern Brook Lake, in order to determine a "budget" for everything which goes in and comes out of the lake. Near the lake, meteorological equipment has been set up to yield data on rainfall, snowfall, wind velocity and other factors.

Nodvin stresses the fact that the studies are being done in the Sierra because of the region's sensitivity, not because any damage has been observed here. "In general, acids coming down are not necessarily a problem," he explains. "But where we're working, there's very little soil in places, and also there's granitic type

Patty-Kay's Yum Yum Factory

OLD FASHIONED
ICE CREAM PARLOR
&
SANDWICH SHOPPE

Sodas, Floats Malts
& Milkshakes

Homemade Waffles for
Cones & Sundaes

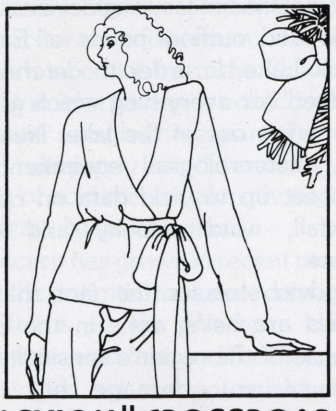
Old Fashioned Hard Candies

103 NORTH MAIN ST.
BISHOP, CA 93514
(619) 872-1520

Winter Clearance Sale.

Take an extra
20%-50% OFF
our ticket prices!

"LOW POPULAR PRICES"



FASHION CROSSROADS™
125 NORTH MAIN STREET
BISHOP, CA. 93514
(619) 872-9131

rock, which reacts very slowly with acid. In any area, the bases in rocks will neutralize acids, but granite does that very, very slowly. An area with granitic rocks and shallow soils has a relatively poor ability to neutralize acids. A lot of places in the Sierra have these granitic rocks, and so poor neutralization."

He goes on to explain the importance of soils, which act as a natural buffer for lakes, neutralizing acids as precipitation percolates through the soil to the lakes. Basins with steep granite slopes and shallow soils, fairly common in the Sierra, are the ones most sensitive to acidity.

For contrast, the scientist explains that the Convict Lake basin is relatively very safe. "Convict Lake is surrounded by limestone," he says, "a very good neutralizer of acid. That area will probably never have a problem, because all the acidity you could put in there would be neutralized by the limestone."

Nodvin's project is essential to a long-term understanding of the effects of acid rain in the Sierra because the comprehensive baseline information he is gathering will provide a basis for comparisons later; at the same time, he is monitoring conditions so that any significant changes or potential problems will be known immediately.

The Eastern Brook Lakes project is not the only long-term acid rain study being conducted in the Sierra Nevada. Scientists from a variety of organizations including the University of California, the National Park Service and the U.S. Geological Survey are conducting intensive acid rain-related studies at Emerald Lake in Sequoia National Park. These studies are being funded by the researcher's own organizations as well as such diverse groups as NASA, Southern Cal Edison, and the California Air Resources Board, among others.

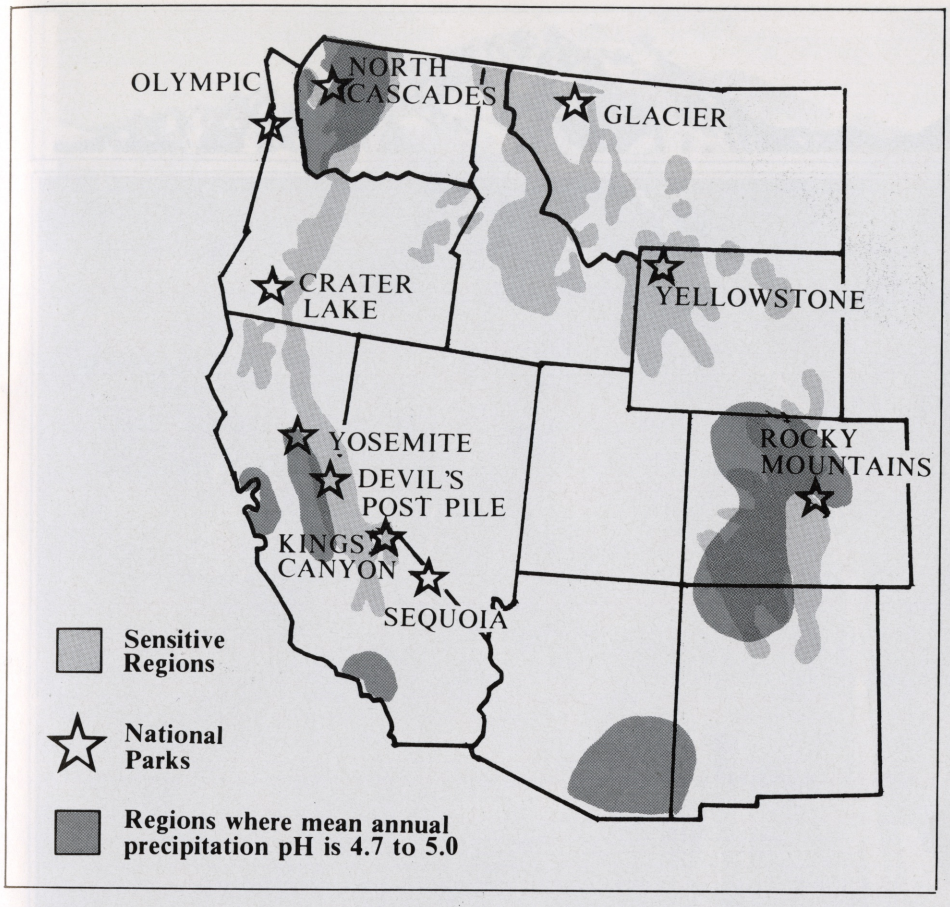
This September, the Environmental Protection Agency began its own major, three-phase acid rain study in the Western United States. That study is being conducted in virtually every state in the West, including seventeen locations in California, many of them in the Sierra Nevada.

The World Resources Institute report indicates that the acid rain problem may be less serious in the Sierra than in the Rockies and Cascades, where precipitation has reached a level of acidity which has been enough to cause biological damage in other parts of the world. The report adds that "while biological damage from precipitation acidity has not been reported in the West, this does not mean that such damage is not occurring undetected or that it will not occur eventually."

Paradoxically, the attention on the West may move the Reagan Administration to act in the East, where the problem is most severe. They may now be moved to formulate a national policy for dealing with acid rain.

The authors of the report have made recommendations for preventative measures, including increased research and monitoring, especially of dry deposition, reducing automotive emissions in California, Washington and Colorado, controlling emissions from smelters, assessing the impact of power plants, and supporting energy conservation and "renewable, non-polluting energy resources." The study also specifically recommends negotiations with the Mexican government about controlling emissions from smelters in Northern Mexico which could create problems in the Rockies.

In the past, the Reagan Administration has been unwilling to acknowledge that the effects of acid rain are a serious problem, or that its causes are known to a degree of certainty to justify taking preventative action. The governors of northeastern states and the Canadian government, among others, have tried unsuccessfully to persuade the Administration to take a more active position on the problem. Several bills aimed at curbing

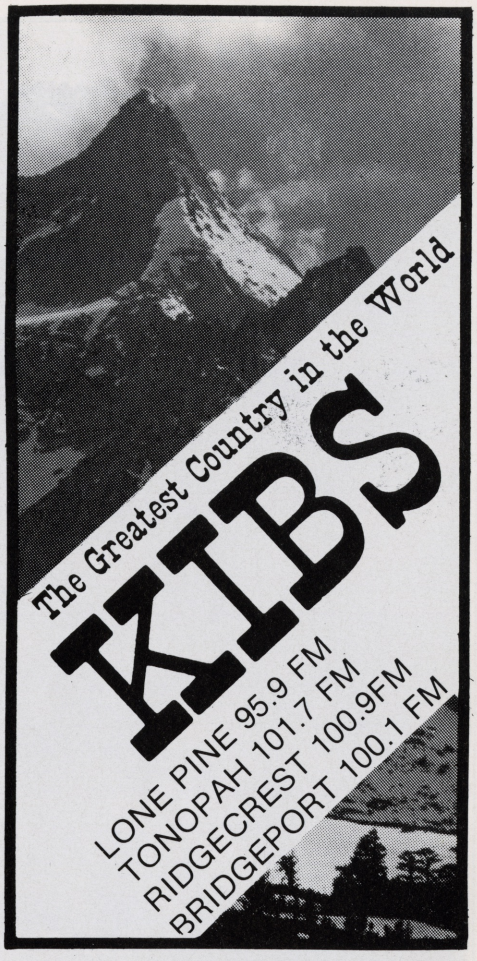


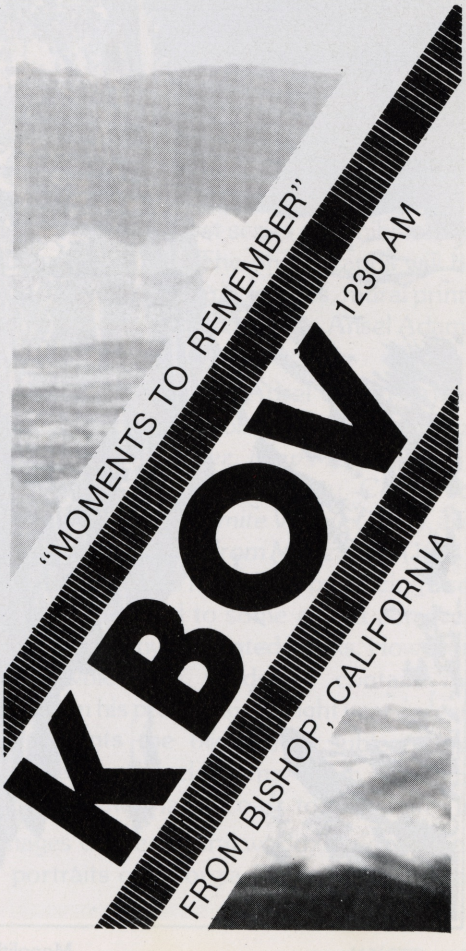
acid rain which have been introduced in Congress have died there. Perhaps fearful of the economic constraints involved in a massive emission-reduction program, the Administration has steadfastly maintained that more study should be done before preventative measures are appropriate, despite scientists' recommendations to the contrary.

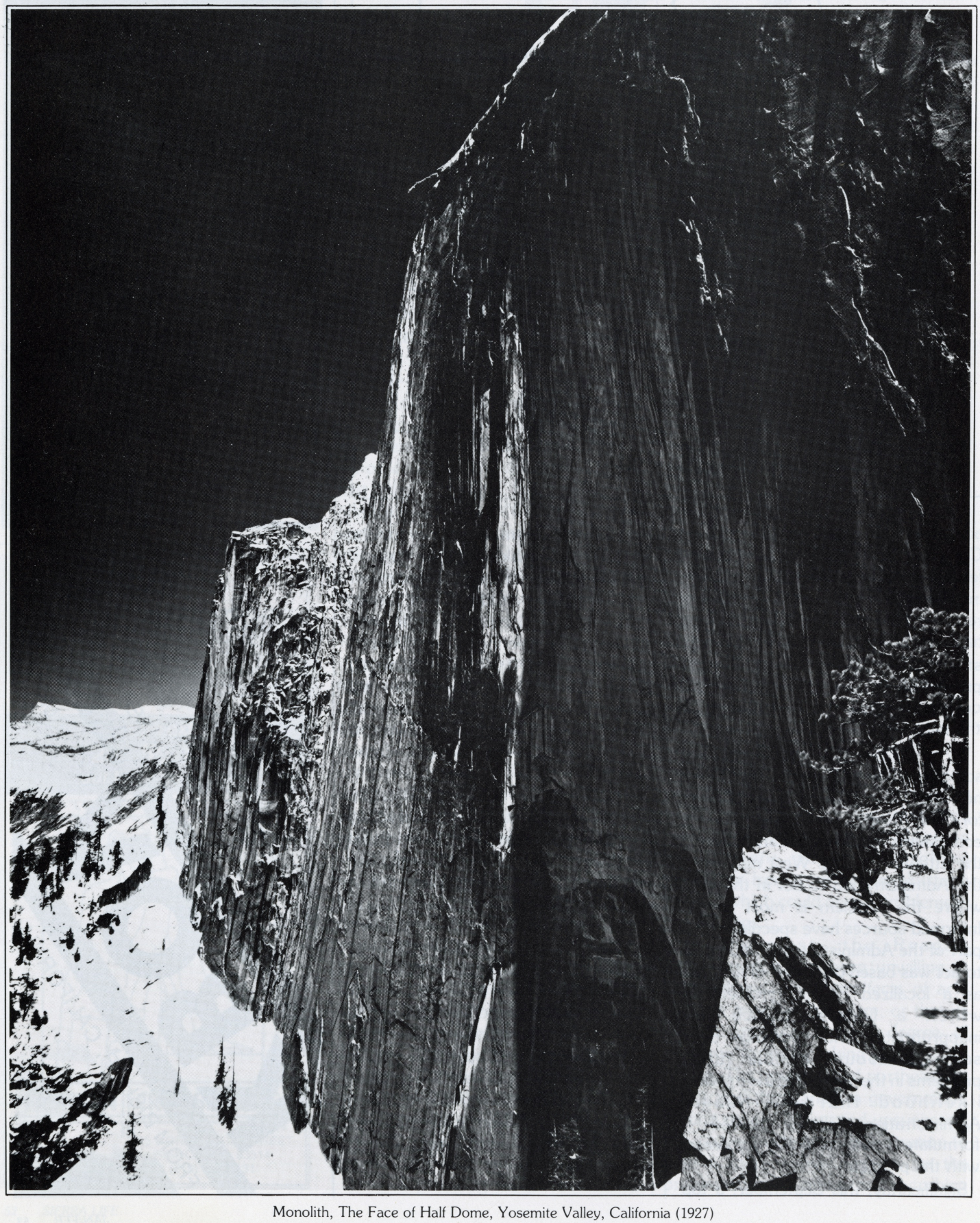
Recently, however, there have been some encouraging signs. The EPA's new study in the West shows a concern for the threat from acid rain to ecosystems nationwide. Paradoxically, the attention on the West may move the Administration to act in the East, where the problem is most severe. Informed sources have speculated that part of the Administration's reluctance to act was based on a view of acid rain as a localized Eastern problem for which a federal policy was inappropriate. With warnings being sounded about possible future problems in the West, there is a greater likelihood that the Reagan Administration will be moved to formulate a national policy for dealing with the problem.

Significantly, this September, a top Reagan Administration official for the first time acknowledged that the acid rain issue needs immediate action, not only continued study. Drew Lewis, Reagan's special envoy on acid rain, speaking at a meeting of New England governors, said, "I will recommend the Administration acknowledge there is a problem. . . Saying (sulfide) doesn't cause acid rain seems to me the same as saying smoking doesn't cause cancer."

Regarding the future of Western ecosystems, scientists have spelled out the potential risks, but even those estimates are based on the presumption that the degrees of acid deposition will remain relatively close to their present levels. Should those levels increase, greater damage can be expected. The fact that some of our most treasured scenic lands are now considered at risk should be enough to spur the Administration to action, even if the recommended palliatives involve some economic constraints. The costs of failing to act are in the long run much greater, as the destruction in other parts of the world has already shown. □





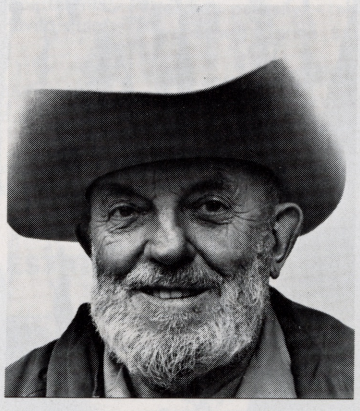


Monolith, The Face of Half Dome, Yosemite Valley, California (1927)

Mount Williamson, Sierra Nevada, from Manzanar, California (1944)

ANSEL ADAMS: classic images

Photos courtesy of the Trustees of the Ansel Adams Publishing Rights Trust



Jim Alinder photo

ANSEL ADAMS

An exhibition of the 'museum set,' seventy-five of the finest images produced by Ansel Adams, will be on view at the San Diego Museum of Art from February 22 to April 27, 1986. The museum set, which is currently on exhibit at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., was selected by Ansel Adams during the last five years of his life to represent the highest quality of his artistic achievement. This is the first series of exhibitions in America of the full museum set. The photographs will be shown with a group of rarely seen large images, mural prints and screens, which are being loaned by Mrs. Ansel Adams and others.

The collection includes many of Ansel Adams' most famous photographs including *Monolith, The Face of Half Dome* (1927), *Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico* (1941), *Clearing Winter Storm, Yosemite Valley, California,* (1944), *Moon and Half Dome, Yosemite Valley*, (1960), and *Mount Williamson, Sierra Nevada, from Manzanar,* (1944).

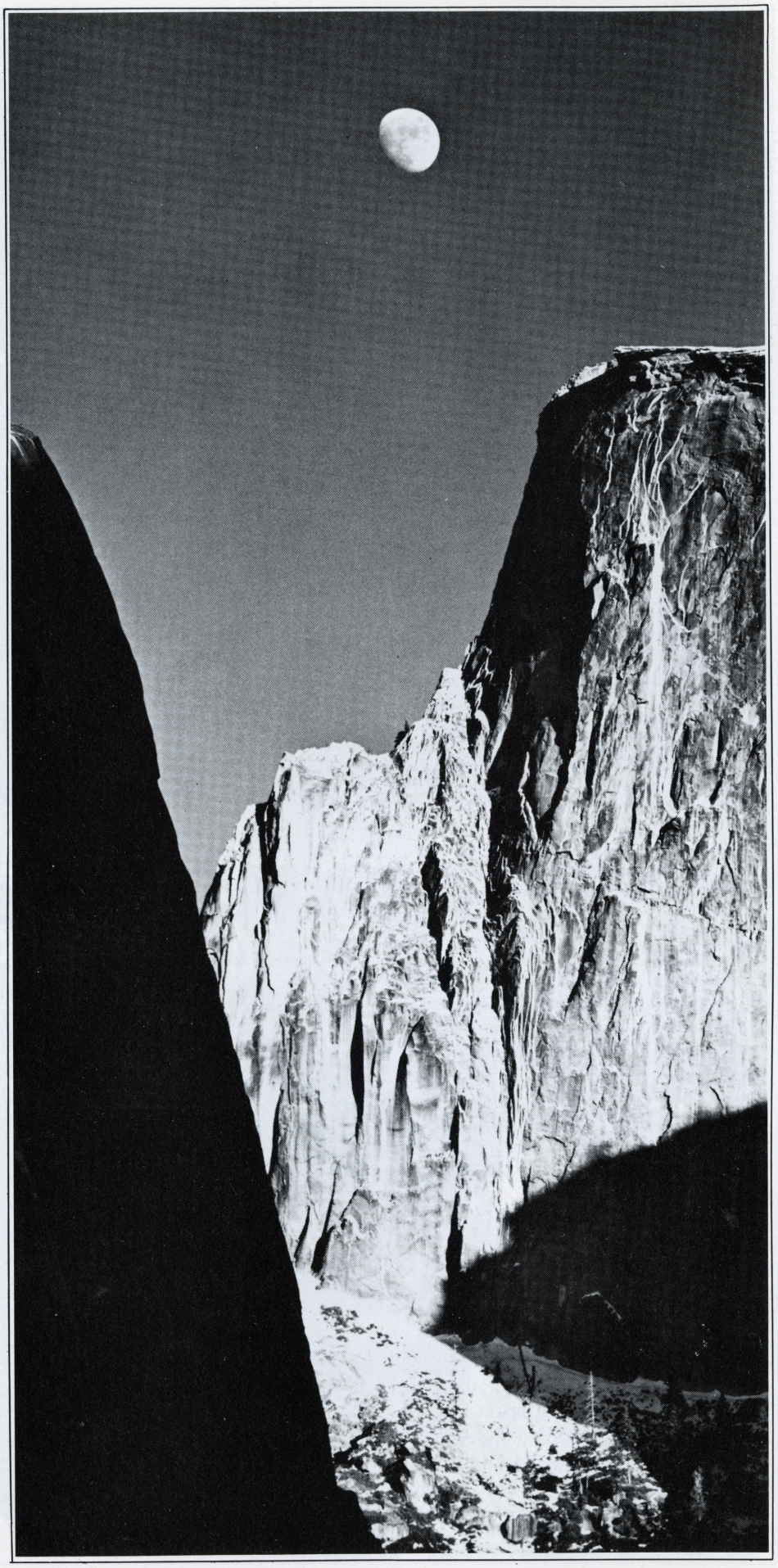
As early as 1930, Ansel Adams thought of producing a set representing his best work, and to some extent achieved this objective through his many illustrated books. However, the museum sets which he produced contain the outstanding images from his prolific, sixty-eight year career. This collection represents the breadth of subjects and locations photographed by Ansel Adams—from Alaska to the Appalachians, from the Maine coast to Yosemite. In addition to the images of the natural world, the exhibition includes Adams' portraits of Georgia O'Keeffe and Alfred Stieglitz.

Having taught himself to play the piano at the age of thirteen, Ansel Adams continued to develop his talent by studying to be a concert pianist. The discipline and high standards which he set for himself as a musician proved invaluable to Adams in the darkroom where he painstakingly worked to create the rich and precise tonal scale that distinguish his photographic prints. In 1941, he developed the Zone System, a tonal scale of eleven zones ranging from total black to pure white that he used to determine the desired densities of the finished print. In a musical analogy, Adams often compared the photographic negative to a musical score, and the print to a performance.

Aspens (Vertical), Northern New Mexico, (1958), exemplifies Adams' dramatic handling of light. Here the three-dimensional quality is achieved by white aspens in the foreground which stand out and appear to be closer to the surface of the photograph than the darker trees in the background. Other prints included in the exhibition which demonstrate similarly striking tonal range are: *Sand Dunes, Sunrise, Death Valley, California,* (1948), and *Winter Sunrise, Sierra Nevada, from Lone Pine, California,* (1944).

Adams made great images from subjects that would be overlooked by a lesser artist. *High Country Crags and Moon, Sunrise,* (1935), *Juniper Tree Detail, Sequoia National Park,* (c. 1927), and *Rock and Grass, Moraine Lake, Sequoia National Park* (c. 1932), show Adams' sensitivity to nature on an intimate scale.

Adams first visited Yosemite National Park during a family vacation in 1916, and photographed the area with a Kodak Box Brownie camera. He continued to photograph the natural beauty of the area throughout his life. On December 13, 1984, the National Park Service officially named a mountain peak in Yosemite for Ansel Adams. Naming the mountain for him was a tribute to the role Adams' photographs played in awakening three generations of Americans to the magnificence of the American West, and the wilderness landscape. Adams himself actively worked for over sixty years to preserve the beauty of the natural world. □



Moon and Half Dome, Yosemite Valley, California (1960)

Sierra Real Estate

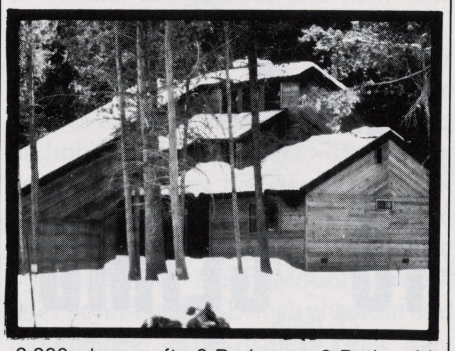
MAMMOTH BUSINESS FOR SALE

By owner

BASKIN-ROBBINS 31

ESTABLISHED 1976
GOOD LOCATION,
GOOD LEASE
CALL LARRY: (619) 934-6731 (619) 934-6394

NEW CUSTOM HOME
JUNE LAKE



2,000 plus sq. ft., 3 Bedroom, 2 Bath, with Dbl. Garage on paved county road. Lot backs to National Forest with a spectacular view & trout stream.

$215,000

number 4 Dream Mtn. Dr.
(1 blk.past Dream Mtn. Resort)
WAITE CONSTRUCTION

(818) 782-1599

Located at corner of Old Mammoth Road and Highway 203, in Mammoth Lakes.

934-3302 P.O. BOX 1030

Inyo-Mono TITLE COMPANY
Bishop • Mammoth Lakes • California

SERVING INYO & MONO COUNTIES

For fast, friendly and accurate Title and Escrow Services

TICOR TITLE INSURANCE

BISHOP REAL ESTATE

Investment - 2 houses on one large lot. 2 BR-1 BA, and 1 BR-1 BA. In town, close to school. **$69,000**

Invest or be your own landlord! 2 BR-1 BA house and 2 one-BR apartments. Excellent condition -View - Paved, quiet **$79,500**

Lot - paved street - 210 by 155 - View of Round Valley & Mount Tom **$12,000**

1/2 Acre lot - Zoned for horses - View - Water included **$20,000** cash or **$22,000** terms.

4 BR house - large corner lot - Duplex behind house, 1 BR-2 BA - Garage - Storage - Patio - Town **$112,000**

248 Acres - Wells - Windmill - Super view fenced partially - seasonal stream - owner will finance **$115,000**

One acre - custom home - 2,200 square feet - own well - 3 BR 2 BA - Family room with wet bar & wood stove - Fireplace in living room **$118,000**

PLEASE SEND REAL ESTATE INFO ☐ **PLEASE CALL** ☐

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY **ZIP**

PHONE

Attn: Carroll Bower or Terri Schaaf, Owners

Clark Realty

2944 W. LINE ST.
BISHOP, CALIFORNIA 93514
(619) 873-6227

I am interested in:

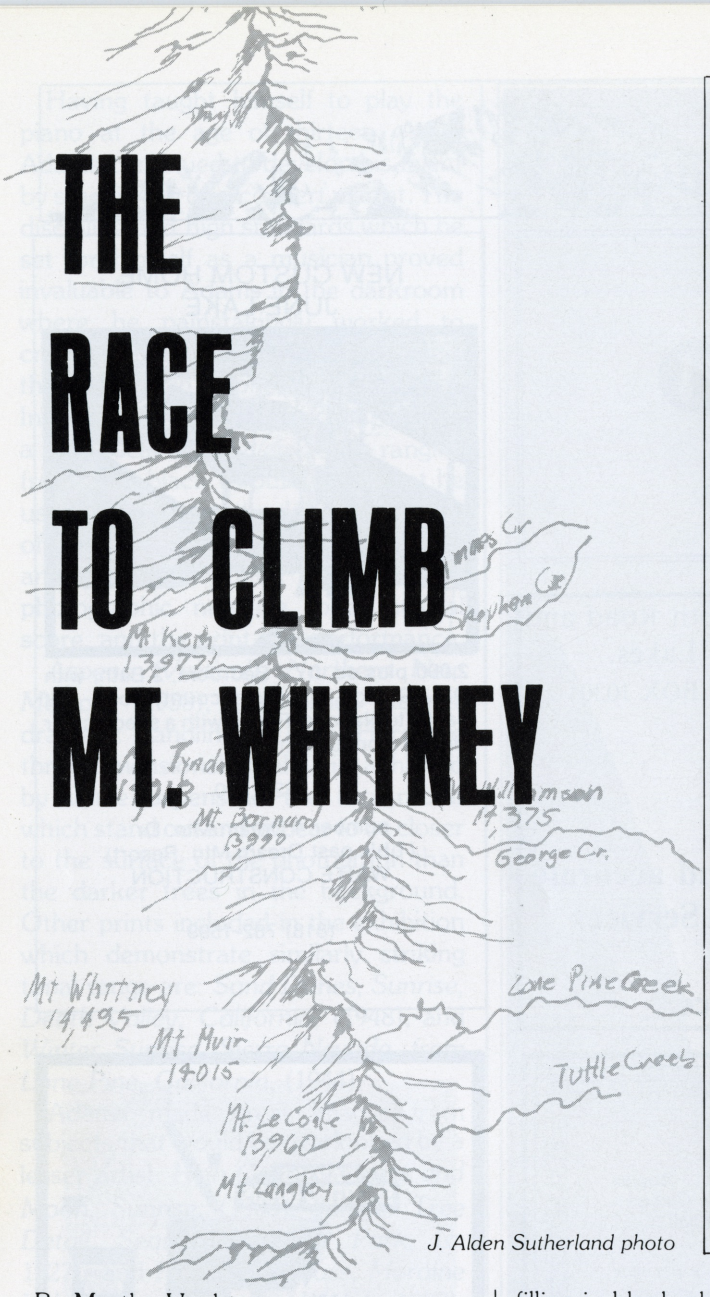
- ☐ **Business**
- ☐ **Mobile Home & Land**
- ☐ **Mobile Home**
- ☐ **Income**
- ☐ **Land**
- ☐ **Residential**

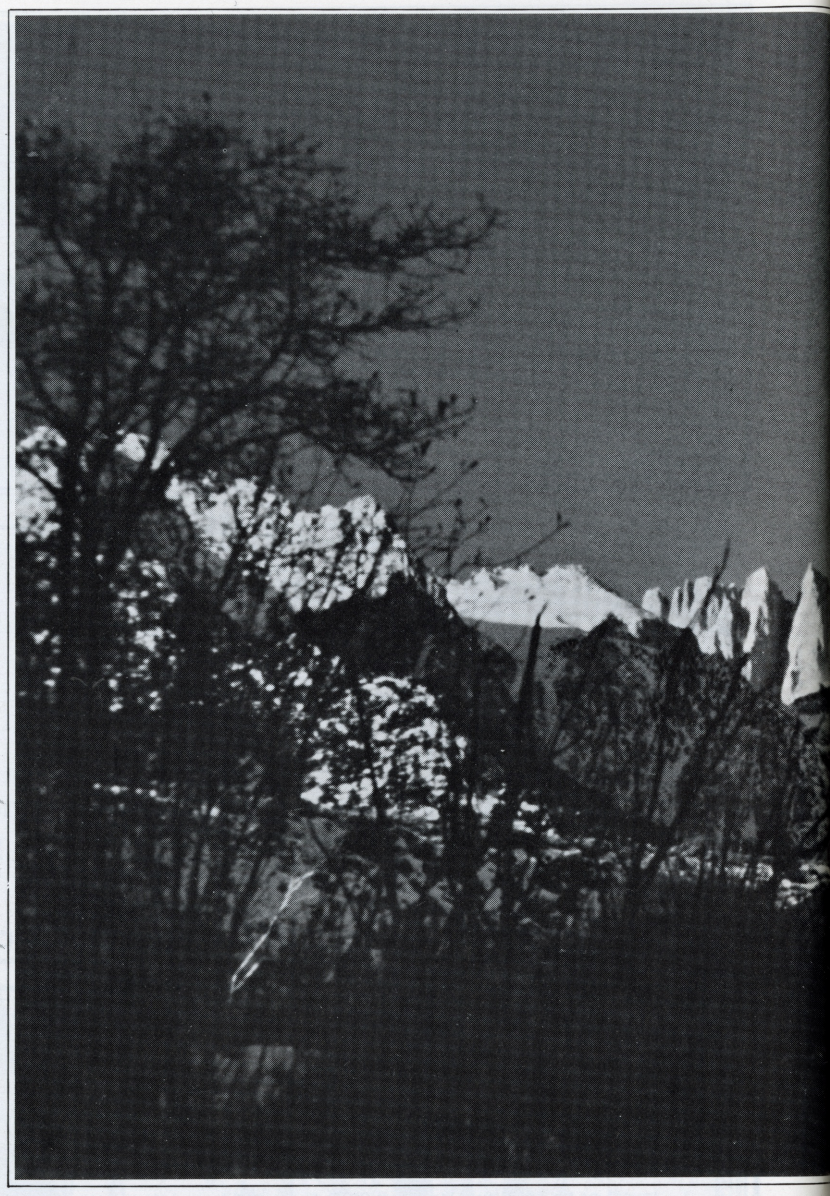
BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

SPORTING GOODS STORE FOR SALE IN BEAUTIFUL DOWNTOWN BISHOP, CA. EXCELLENT LOCATION, LOTS OF PARKING. GOOD FOR A COUPLE OR A FAMILY OPERATED BUSINESS. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CALL: (619) 872-4781

ASK FOR GENE OR MJB, AGENTS

THE RACE TO CLIMB MT. WHITNEY





J. Alden Sutherland photo

By Martha Voght

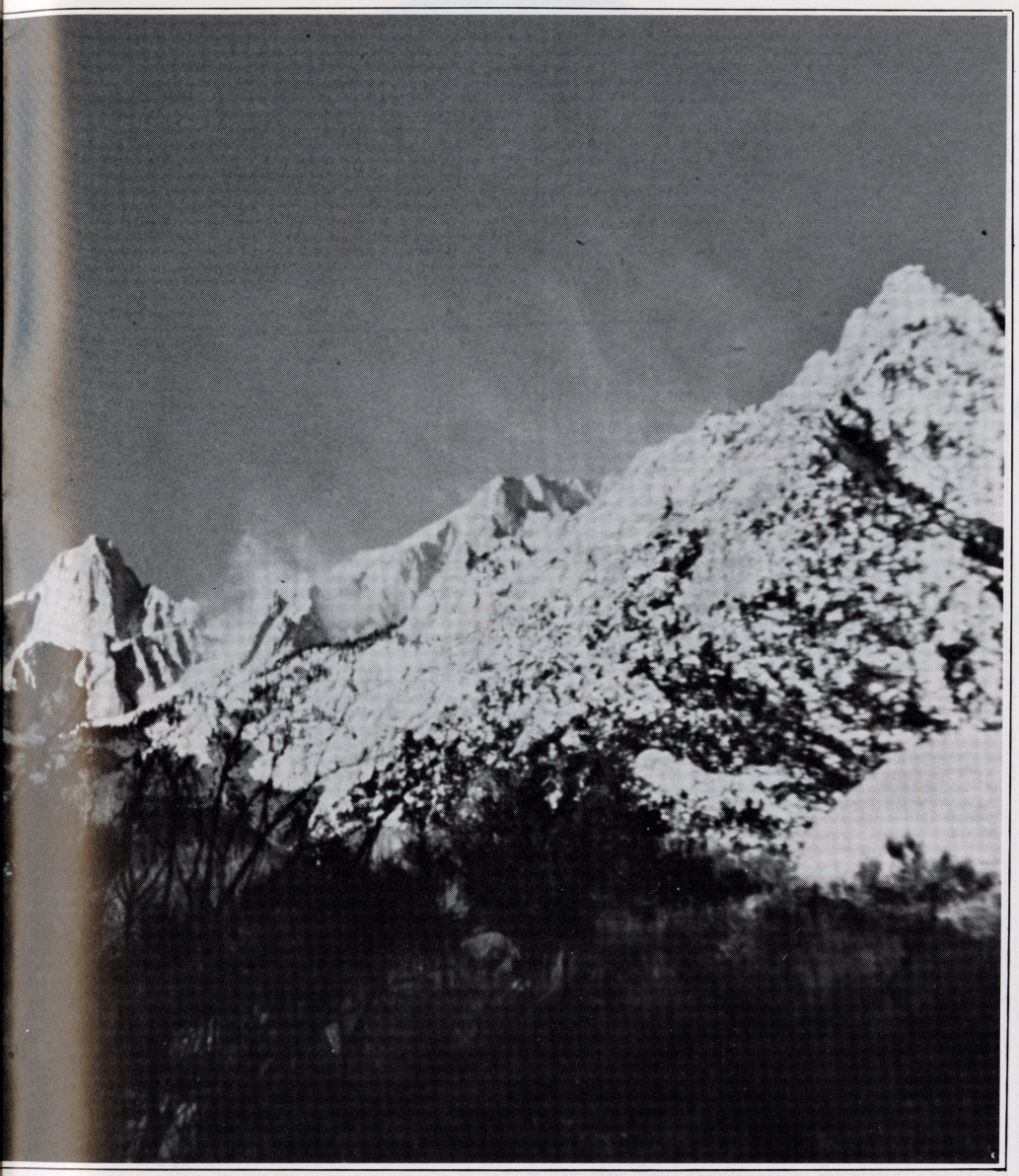
The two climbers scrutinized the mountainside above and debated what route might lead to the summit. Twice they had scaled a likely looking slot, only to find themselves in a *cul-de-sac*, forced to sacrifice elevation to find another path. They had no printed guide to the mountain; they did not expect to find a register on top where they could proudly sign their names. As a matter of fact, they didn't know what lay on the other side, for this was July, 1864, and William Brewer and Charles Hoffman were exploring for the California Geological Survey.

Their party of five had spent a week at the headwaters of the Kings River, looking for resources which might contribute to the state's economy and filling in blank places on the California map. As a finishing touch to this preliminary exploration, Brewer, leader of the group, thought he should climb the "cone" that looked to be the highest point in the area, perhaps as much as 12,000 feet above sea level. From its summit he expected to see the Sierra Nevada falling away eastward to the floor of the Owens Valley.

After eight hours, Brewer and Hoffman mounted the summit block and gaped at the sight beyond. They could see at least a dozen peaks as high or higher than the one on which they stood, and their barometers indicated they were over 13,500 feet in elevation! Brewer, whose diary is usually paced and restrained, soared into poetry:

"Such a landscape! A hundred peaks in sight over thirteen thousand feet—many very sharp—deep canyons, cliffs in every direction almost rivaling Yosemite, sharp ridges almost inaccessible to man, on which human foot has never trod—all combined to produce a view the sublimity of which is rarely equaled, one which few are privileged to behold."

So it was on July 2, 1864, the magnificent heights of the Southern Sierra Nevada were officially discovered. The Indians, of course, had known about them for centuries. The miners, fur trappers, ranchers and farmers who had more recently frequented the Owens Valley were aware of the rugged peaks at their doorstep. But in the strange way of a civilization dependent upon the printed page, it is to the California Geological Survey that the discovery is credited, and it is from this moment that the



mountaineering history of the Southern Sierra descends.

Exhausted from their day's work, Brewer and Hoffman slogged back to camp. After reviving their strength with the venison soup and tea waiting on the campfire, they regaled their companions with exciting news. A dozen or more peaks over 13,500 feet tall! But, Brewer cautioned, none probably taller than Mount Shasta, which was still considered the highest point in California, if not the entire United States.

Brewer was a scientist, an agricultural chemist trained at Yale, and a college professor until 1860 when he went to work for the state of California. His view of the mountains tended to scientific detachment, even while he appreciated their drama. He climbed when it was necessary for the job at hand.

He had, however, a companion on this trail who looked at mountains and saw a physical challenge. Clarence King longed to match his strong body, honed to fitness by months in trail-less ranges, against this cluster of high peaks. Even as Brewer and Hoffman rhapsodized around the campfire, he was planning the assault.

Two days later King and Richard Cotter, the scientist's mule skinner, left the others and set out to battle the giants. They were armed with new hobnails on their boots, barometers, compass, pocket-level, wet and dry thermometers, notebooks, bread, cooked beans, and venison, all rolled in blankets which they fashioned into approximations of knapsacks. Each pack weighed about forty pounds. The mere thought of such torturous, unwieldy loads would make most modern backpackers take up bowling.

Brewer trekked part way with the adventurers and inquired of King as they neared the point of parting, "What are your plans?" "To reach the highest peak in the range," replied King. It was to remain his goal for the next nine years.

Five days later King and Cotter returned to camp triumphant, even though Cotter's boots had given up and he hobbled in with his feet wrapped in flour sacks. They had climbed a peak nearly 14,400 feet high and had seen five more higher still. They named the one on which they stood Mount Tyndall, after John Tyndall, British physicist and mountaineer. The highest peak they proposed to call Mount Whitney, after the head of the California Geological Survey, Professor Josiah Whitney.

Mount Whitney, King wrote, is a "cleanly cut helmet of granite" and "probably the highest land within the United States. The summit looks glorious, but inaccessible."

Supplies were running low and Brewer had a toothache, so the party turned their backs on the "cone" they were already calling Mount Brewer, and retreated to the village of Visalia where they could reprovision and find a dentist. Clarence King, however, was not ready to rest. He begged for another chance at the peak floating through his dreams. Brewer, suffering from a swollen, infected jaw which allowed him no sleep, was easily worn down. He gave permission for a renewed attempt on the summit of the Sierra.

King persuaded two soldiers from the local cavalry post to come with him, and set out on a traverse of the Sierra without topo maps, down sleeping bags, freeze-dried food, or even a clear idea of a route he might take. A cattleman named Hockett had recently built a trail up the South Fork of the Kaweah River, so the expedition started eastward there.

At the Kern River they ran out of trail; King pressed forward with compass and his own mountain sense to guide him. The soldiers seem to have stayed behind somewhere on the headwaters of the Kern, for they drop from the record. They were probably enjoying their unexpected vacation from a

BIG PINE

BIG PINE MOTEL

P.O.BOX 374 (619) 938-2282
SOUTH MAIN ST. BIG PINE, CA.

938-2311 EXXON
MAKE YOUR DESTINATION

BIG PINE STATION
SPORTING GOODS
TACKLE - ICE - AMMUNITION
SOUVENIRS - WESTERN WEAR
BEER - WINE
430 S. MAIN ST.
BIG PINE, CA. 93513

BIG PINE REALTY
RESIDENTIAL &
MOBILE HOMES
MODULAR HOUSING
CREEK LOTS
COMMERCIAL & MORE
(619) 938-2525
102 N. MAIN BIG PINE

MENDENHALL'S
GIFT
&
SPORTING GOODS
STORE
126 S.MAIN ST.BIG PINE
(938-2274)

The California State Geological Survey party of 1864, left to right: Charles Hoffman, Dick Cotter, William Brewer, and Clarence King. *Photo courtesy of the Bancroft Library*

Central Valley summer and saw no reason to ruin it by trying to climb a mountain King himself already labeled "inaccessible."

King returned defeated. Cold and lack of food drove him off the peaks after he had reached an elevation of about 14,000 feet, perhaps higher. He may also have been psychologically hampered by being alone and by the hobgoblin of inaccessibility, which flits through his mountain writings like a butterfly in a mountain meadow.

The California Survey was busy determining the boundaries of the Yosemite Grant; King rejoined them there. He had other jobs, was on other expeditions, but always he remembered the lure of that granitic helmet and his determination to be the first man to stand on its summit.

In 1871, chance brought him to San Francisco. He made a detour on his eastbound journey, a two day stage trip along the eastern face of the Sierra to the Owens Valley and the foot of the mountain he had viewed from Mount Tyndall seven years before. With Paul Pinson of Lone Pine he struggled to an alpine meadow and made camp. King was no longer in the splendid physical condition of his survey days. Clouds were roiling around the peaks, threatening rain, snow, or, even worse, lightning. But on the following day he overcame all difficulties and the two men stood on the summit. The only mark of human precedence was a cairn with an arrow enclosed within it. King took it to mean he and Pinson were the first white men to have climbed Mount Whitney.

News of the first ascent hit the newspapers. The *San Francisco Bulletin* reported Clarence King had reached the summit of what was suspected to be the highest mountain in the West on June 22, 1871, and promised "we shall doubtless soon know the exact elevation. . . Mr. King will probably write up an account of this late trip for *The Atlantic*, as the

The view north from Mount Whitney to Mount Williamson *J. Alden Sutherland photo*

conclusion of his series of mountaineering papers, which are to appear finally in book form."

Mr. King did indeed "write up an account" of the Whitney climb for *The Atlantic Monthly*, but he was rather vague about the elevation he had reached, passing over the phrase "fifteen thousand feet" very quickly. Considering he had left a barometer in Lone Pine and carried a second to the summit as a means of checking the exact elevation, it seems strange he did not report this all-important fact in greater detail.

He did manage to insult the residents of the Owens Valley by describing them as "people whose faces and dress and life and manners are sadder than any possibilities held up to us by Darwin." He implied there had been an improvement in the "political tone in Tuolumne by the presence here of so large a share of her most degraded citizens."

The central portion of the article was a dramatic, poetic exercise about the mountain he had climbed:

"Velvet of alpine sward edging an icy brooklet by whose margin we sat down, reached to the right and left far enough to spread a narrow foreground, over which we saw a chain of peaks swelling from either side toward our amphitheatre's head, where, springing splendidly over them all, stood the sharp form of Whitney. . . Sombre storm-clouds and their even gloomier shadows darkened the northern sea of peaks. Only a few bars of sudden light flashed in upon the granite and fields of ice. The rocky tower of Mount Tyndall, thrust up through the rolling billows, caught for a moment the full light, and then sank into darkness and mist."

King was wrong. It was not Mount Tyndall he saw faintly through the clouds, but Mount Whitney!

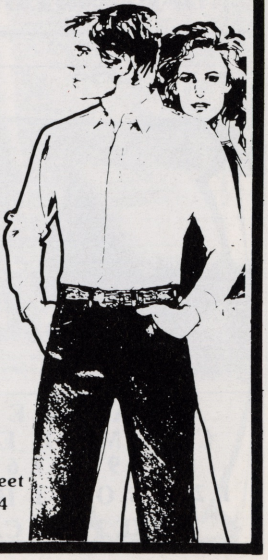
For two years everyone believed King's *Atlantic* article and he was hailed as the first white man to stand on the high point of America. The helmet-shaped mountain he had climbed was called Mount Whitney by the people of the Owens Valley and it was so marked on the maps of California. In July, 1873, scientist W.A. Goodyear and some companions rode horses to the top of "Mount Whitney," found a note King had left on the summit, then raised their eyes to the north. There, six miles away, hovering above them in the clear air, stood a higher mountain!

It took only a few days for the news to spread from Lone Pine to San Francisco and thence to New Haven, Connecticut, where King lived. He rescheduled his summer and fall, entrained for the Central Valley (perhaps he thought he might not be well received again in the Owens Valley), hired some packers in Visalia, and set out once more to conquer the

SPELLBINDER BOOKS

ROMANCE ADVENTURE
BEST SELLERS REFERENCE
"1986 CALENDARS"
The Perfect Gift!
Get your copy of
WATER & POWER
as seen in this issue
of Sierra Life.
137 N. Main St. Bishop, CA.
(619) 873-4511
GIFT CERTIFICATES
FOR THE HOLIDAYS
CLASSICS PHILOSOPHY
SCIENCE FICTION COOKBOOKS

RICH'S BITCHES
Holiday Favorites
Gifts for Guys & Gals.



136 West Line Street
Bishop, CA 93514
(619) 873-5966

INDEPENDENCE
POTTERY
by
ANDREW WICKMAN
STONEWARE & RAKU
FINE ART
ETCHINGS
878-2012
139 N. EDWARDS (HWY 395)
INDEPENDENCE

WELCOME
TO
LONE PINE

CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE
(619)876-4444
126 SOUTH MAIN
LONE PINE, CA. 93545

elusive mountain. It was growing late in the summer, and the first storms of autumn might move across the range at any time.

Meanwhile, the news set wheels turning in the minds of some folks from Lone Pine. They had had their fill of Clarence King, Josiah Whitney, and the California Geological Survey. A few months after King's defaming article, in the sad aftermath of the 1872 earthquake, Josiah Whitney made a hasty trip through the valley. The residents had supposed the Owens Valley an important study area for earthquakes and had expected more than this cursory glance from the California Survey. An equally hasty article by Whitney about the earthquake and its environs was so full of inaccuracies his reputation sank well below ground level in the "deepest valley."

Early in August, 1873, a group of Owens Valley residents rode into the Sierra to escape the heat, do a little fishing, relax, and (someone must have had the idea before setting out) investigate a few mountain peaks. The party that camped in Kern Canyon was rather large, including Inyo County Sheriff Mulkey, his wife and daughter, plus several others of whom we know three: Charley Begole, Al Johnson, and Johnny Lucas. These men set off to climb the highest peak in the range. At first they fell into the same trap that had betrayed King and climbed the wrong mountain, but the air was clear and they saw the true summit. Next day, August 18, 1873, they stood on the high point of the Sierra Nevada. Gazing down on their hometown, they decided it deserved a hometown name. The mountain was christened Fisherman's Peak, after the avocation of its first conquerors. They built a monument of stones, the first of many.

While the anglers lounged in Kern Canyon, M.W. Belshaw, who had been with Goodyear in July, was organizing an expedition for a first ascent. Not being content with a simple fishing trip, he determined to put together a well-provisioned, well-mounted group, with scientific thoroughness and aims. Early in September they took their pack animals over Cottonwood Pass, camped in Whitney Meadows, and on September 6 found the summit, complete with monument built by the athletic fishermen.

Clarence King was still puffing across the continent. It was September 19 when he finally mounted the summit and, to his great dismay, found the monument, plus a half-dollar left by a member of the second party. The coin was accompanied by a note telling any panting successor he might keep it. King left it where it lay, for on October 21 the most famous of Sierra mountaineers, John Muir, noticed it still there and recorded the fact in his diary.

Muir's ascent is of special interest, for while other early climbers took pack animals to the interior of the range and climbed the western face of the mountain, Muir had *walked* from Independence to Lone Pine Creek, where he camped overnight, climbed up the North Fork of Lone Pine Creek to a second camp at timberline, then arose before sunup to reach the summit at 8 a.m. the following morning. He was the spearhead of thousands of backpackers who would eventually climb Mount Whitney, and the path he pioneered is now the Mountaineer's Route up Whitney's eastern side.

While Muir scrambled across the autumn face of the Sierra a newspaper war was erupting over what the peak was to be named and who had climbed it first. Owens Valley residents saw no reason to move the name Whitney from the peak Clarence King had climbed in 1871; adherents of the California Geological Survey claimed the name Fisherman's Peak lacked romance; the Inyoites retorted they saw nothing romantic about Whitney. The California Survey, however, controlled the maps, and Whitney the high point became.

Belshaw and the men who accompanied him twisted their record of events to make it appear they had been the pioneers, followed by the fishermen, whom they dismissed as merely "itinerant climbers," not people of science. Fortunately, one of Belshaw's companions had already written an account of the trip which proved the Lone Pine fellows were not simply telling tall tales. He described how he had hung a barometer on a cairn found on the summit—the monument built by Begole, Johnson, and Lucas. Case dismissed!

But is it? To this day Messrs. Begole, Johnson, and Lucas are credited in climbing guides with the first ascent of Whitney. In reality, it is doubtful if they were even the first white men to make the trip.

Long before 1873, the Sierra were being informally explored. In fact, the 1864 Geological Survey party had met prospectors from the Owens Valley who had crossed the crest of the range to the Kings River drainage. In 1871 an unnamed man offered to guide Charles Hoffman to the summit of Mount Whitney, which he said he had already climbed. Innumerable Owens Valley residents spent weeks at a time in the Sierra hunting and fishing. Sometimes their absence was noted by the newspaper, as on July 8, 1871, when the *Inyo Independent* remarked that eight sportsmen from Kearsarge had gone into the Sierra after game. The editor concluded: "They will doubtless return with something good to eat and a lot of bear stories," demonstrating that Sierra trekkers of the 1870's were probably much similar to those of today.

Guy Earl, in *The Enchanted Valley*, a memoir of the Owens Valley at this period, describes cattle drives over passes both north and south of Mount Whitney, as well as trips into the Kearsarge area to get ice for the saloons of Independence. It would be strange if none of these adventurous people ever bothered to climb a tempting summit on a lazy summer's day. At least a few probably did.

No one of them, however, left a written record historians have found, so we must be content with the story we know.

What became of the first "Mount Whitney?" In 1881 a scientific party occupied the summit of the real Whitney for astronomical observations, led by Professor Samuel Pierpont Langley, a pioneer in the use of high altitudes for scientific investigations. In tribute his name was applied to a helmet-shaped, granite peak about six miles south of Mount Whitney, elevation 14,042. It stands sharply above Army Pass and Cottonwood Lakes. Tourists passing below on Highway 395 often mistake Mount Langley for the highest peak in the range. □

THE ROSICRUCIAN FELLOWSHIP

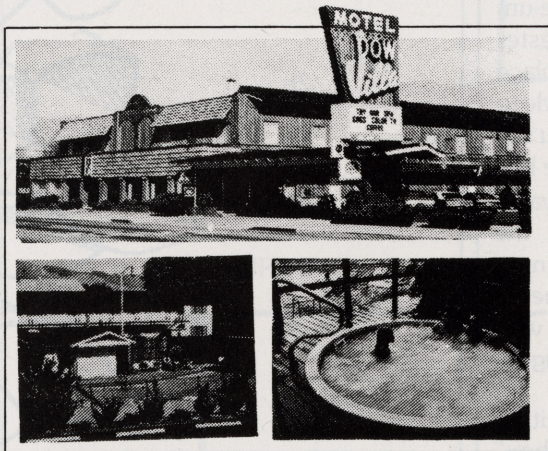
We invite you to explore:

Healing and the Vegetarian Diet
Esoteric Foundations of Christianity
Spiritual Interpretations of Astrology
Hidden Truths in the Holy Bible

We use scientific explanations to describe the Laws of the Universe, helping you to blend Christ Love with the intellectual mind.

You are welcome to visit our beautiful grounds where classes are conducted weekly. Call or write for FREE publications catalog, nutrition pamphlet, and introductory course literature.

THE ROSICRUCIAN FELLOWSHIP, 2222 Mission Avenue
Dept. H, P. O. Box 713, Oceanside, CA. 92054 (619) 757-6600



DOW VILLA MOTEL

A friendly place to stay in the center of town; every facility for your comfort and convenience:
Cable Color TV — Coffee
Heated Pool — 24 hour phones
YEAR 'ROUND HOT SPA
24 hour Coffee Shop
— Golf Package Available —

310 South Main Street
Lone Pine, CA 93545
Phone (619) 876-5521
Toll Free 1 (800) 824-9317

WANTED

Light, non-polluting industry for relocation to Eastern Sierra region. We will supply talented, energetic labor force, will make land available for construction of facilities. Will cut red tape and make life easy for you.
Interested? Call us for details
(619) 873-6534, or write
699 W. Line St./Bishop, CA 93514

UNBAFFLING BAFFLE REPAIRS

© 1984 THE DOWN DEPOT
illustrations by Jane Barton

Genie Dvorak, Senior Seamstress at the Down Depot, was a major contributor to the text and sewing concepts used in this article.

See the July/August 1985 issue of SIERRA LIFE for more tips on repairing down gear.

Have you been experiencing "cold spots" while snuggled in your down bag lately? Notice any ripped stitching along the horizontal seams? If so, your baffles need repairing.

Baffles are the interior chamber walls of your sleeping bag (or garment) which contain the down and keep it evenly distributed. Because they are so vital to your comfort, it is important to check periodically for broken baffles and repair them as needed.

Baffle Construction

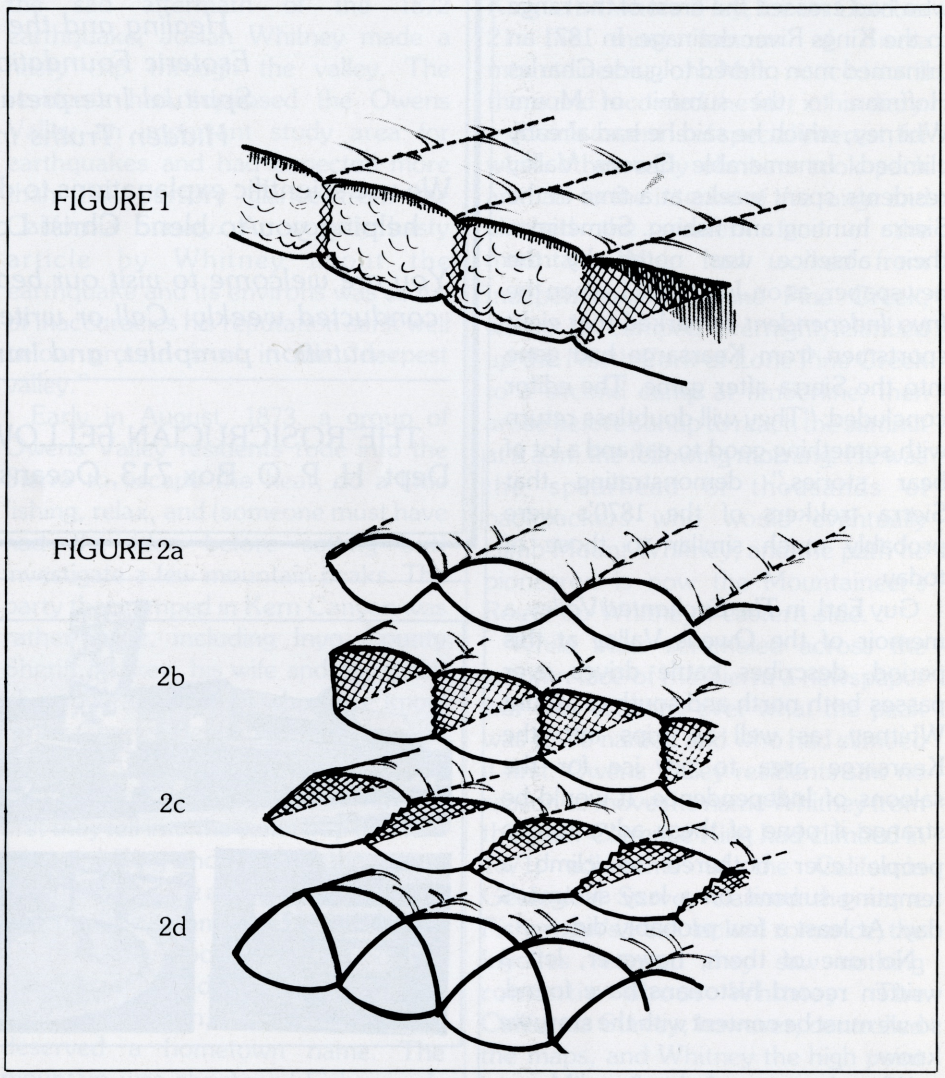
As illustrated in Figure 1, baffles are the chamber walls sewn between the inner and outer shells of a sleeping bag or garment. They are made of lightweight material, such as no-see-um netting, ripstop nylon or polyester stretch knit, and are stitched in place straight across the bag from one side to the other. The lines of stitching you see running horizontally all around the bag are the top edges of each baffle wall.

Baffle construction eliminates the problem of cold spots where the inner and outer shells are stitched together—a problem commonly associated with single quilt construction (see Figure 2a.)

Baffles can be stitched in place either straight up and down, forming "box" baffles (Figure 2b) or at a slight angle forming "slant-wall" baffles (Figure 2c). Another construction stitches baffles in overlapping V-shaped patterns, which keeps down from migrating to the sides of sleeping bags when you roll over (see Figure 2d).

How To Check For Broken Baffles

Having described baffle construction, it becomes easier to describe the different ways a baffle can break. *First,* the stitching that connects the edge of each baffle wall to the shell fabric can simply rot out. *Second,* the edge of the baffle material itself can fray, leaving the stitching intact, but the baffle wall "disconnected" from the shell. *Third,* sections of the interior baffle wall can fray or tear, allowing down to shift through to the next baffle.



Checking for broken baffles is relatively simple. With the zipper unzipped, lay your bag out flat. Carefully examine the visible stitching lines that connect each baffle wall to the inner and outer shells of the bag. If the stitching is ripped out or loose, the baffle is damaged.

The other two types of baffle breakage cannot be detected just by examining the visible stitching lines. Keeping in mind the different types of baffle construction, hold part of a stitching line between your fingers. Slide your other hand under the bag and grasp the corresponding stitching line. (Remember, the corresponding stitching line will not be directly "beneath" the one you're holding if the construction is slant-wall or V-shaped). Tug gently. There should be resistance; if there is not, the baffle is broken. Continuing in this manner, become familiar with the baffle construction of your bag as you check for broken baffles.

Basic Repair Instructions

Regardless of how the baffle has broken, the repair procedure is the same. First, determine where the breakage is. Mark the endpoints with pins. Staying as close to the stitching line (or where it used to be) as possible, cut *on the stitching line* between the pins (see Figure 3).

Carefully separate the edges of the bag at the cut so you can see inside. If the damage is extensive, you may have to search a bit for the baffle material. Note if the material is getting frayed or worn. If it appears to be in healthy condition, and the only damage was a ripped out stitching line, proceed to sew the baffle back up as described below.

To sew up the baffle, bring the edge of the baffle wall to one edge of the cut outer shell. Next, add the other edge of the cut. Pin. Start in the middle and work to the endpoints, adjusting as you pin to make the layers lie flat (see Figure 4).

Starting at an endpoint, zig-zag the entire cut through all three thicknesses. The zig-zag stitches should be very close together forming a secure thread "ridge" where you sew (see Figure 5). The best way to get that type of stitch is to set the sewing machine at the *widest* zig-zag and the *narrowest* stitch length settings. Then, holding the repair area securely, feed the material through the machine *very slowly*, with lots of tension from your hands. Make sure to catch the baffle material with each stitch.

Repairing Frayed or Torn Baffles

If the edge of the baffle wall is frayed, but not an extensive amount (for example, less than 1/4 of the baffle wall), simply pull it up and repair as described in the basic repair instructions. The baffle wall will be slightly narrower, but still functional. If part of the baffle wall has torn, but all the material is intact, simply pin the tear and zig-zag it, using the stitch described above. Work only with the baffle material, not the outer shell (see Figure 6). When the tear is sewn, proceed with the basic repair instructions.

If a large section of the baffle wall has basically disintegrated or frayed beyond recognition, cut out the entire area and discard. You may have to detach it from the opposite stitching line if that hasn't ripped out. Then, using material similar to the existing baffle, cut a piece the same size as the one you removed *plus* 1/4 inch on each edge. Pin the edges of the new baffle insert to the edges of the existing baffle and zig-zag as described in the basic repair.

That's all there is to it!

FIGURE 3

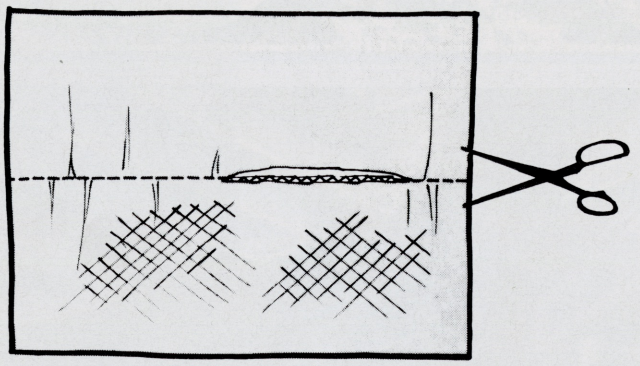


FIGURE 4

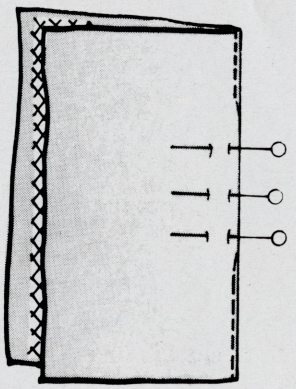


FIGURE 5

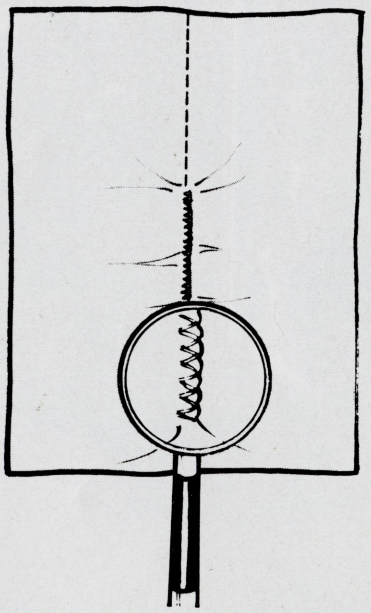
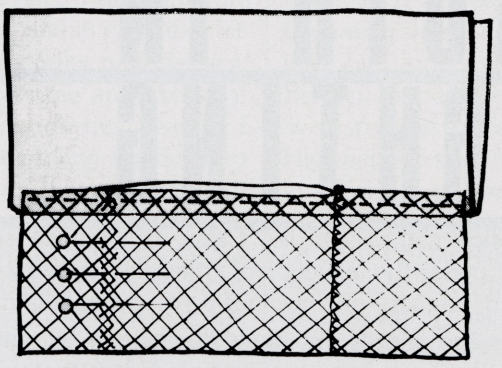


FIGURE 6

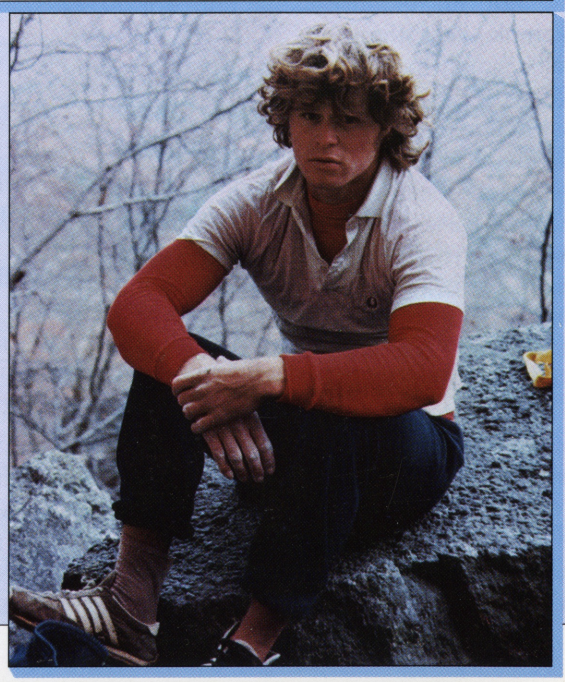


For more information on cleaning and repair care for your down-filled equipment, contact:
The Down Depot
701 Shrader Street
San Francisco, CA 94117
(415) 668-DOWN

TRUTH IN LIGHTING

THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF VERN CLEVENGER

by Doug Robinson



Civilization makes light lie. These days we live so much under the influence of artificial light that we are in danger, unconsciously, of accepting its reality. Consider the fluorescent glow illuminating big city rooms, rooms without windows or with tinted glass that will not open to the air. Spend a day in there and it all begins to seem normal, until you step into the evening to find perception skewed further by quartz-iodide streetlights, sharp and pallid. It's enough to make one reach for sunglasses. Everyone else on the street already has, it seems. Those Vuarnet glasses are such a telling cloak of modernity, both a one-way mirror to retire behind and an automatic brightener to any scene (boy, is it *yellow* out there). The lenses were originally designed for alpine stormlight, to highlight contrast in vague terrain. But to

judge from all the Vuarnets out in public these days, we must feel a need for the dramatic cheeriness they add to any scene, now more than ever.

From such shaded realms we flee to the mountains, realizing only later how deeply we are touched by so simple a thing as real, seamless light. I saw that light first in Yosemite soon after I could walk, then followed it afoot south into the high Sierra. And it was not long afterwards that I began seeing the Range of Light translated onto glossy paper, by Ansel Adams into black and white and by Richard Kauffman with color images compiled in early exhibit-format Sierra Club books, now classics. Years slid by; I became an habitue of the range, a fool for her beauty. I strolled through or clung tightly onto different facets of that terrain with Galen Rowell, and paused before his lens. I carried pounds of my own glass over the crest, and spent city evenings across the country talking behind the luminous images in darkened rooms. Just recently, with Ansel Adams' death, I have watched the living light standard in black and white pass to Gordon Wiltsie. And the color standard, without a doubt, is now being upheld by Vern Clevenger.

I needed someone to knock off my blinders, and didn't know it. But how could you know, with perceptions fully accommodated to Vuarnet space and Kodachrome light? That's another, more subtle bias, glinting from Kodachrome film, which brightens reds as the light dims until we begin to think that sunsets really are like postcards. Nearly as common as that to photographers is the polarizing filter. Something like putting Vuarnets on your camera, it builds contrast at the expense of subtle gradations of color, until a subject seems to be etched in outline, highlighted to a boldness of image that we might wish reflected the visual truth. They can be that seductive, those contrast-enhanced, color-enriched images.

But the time arrives to come out from behind the Kodachrome, to shed the "Neys." My moment came unexpectedly, the day Vern Clevenger showed up with a color print under his arm.

I couldn't have expected it less. I had known Vern for years as a climber. He arrived in Yosemite Valley early in his teens under the wing of Galen Rowell. He was big, not always an advantage, and awkward then, but very strong and with boundless enthusiasm. He got good in a hurry, a sort of ragged *wunderkind*, and soon began conceiving and orchestrating first ascents. Over the next decade I watched Vern become famous, one of the "guns" of the Valley, itself just gaining its due recognition as an international climbing center.

Through it all Vern retained a becoming shyness. I remember running into him once on the outskirts of Bishop. He pulled over. The car he was living in came to rest on the shoulder of Highway 395 next to the car I was living in. Vern's powerful presence was contradicted by his manner, eyes downcast to his feet kicking at the dust, body slouched forward until a great mop of unruly hair fell over his eyes. Only when talk came around to the high Sierra did he lose self-consciousness and speak with direct enthusiasm. Unlike the majority of Yosemite rock jocks, Vern's life was not complete without a big dose of rambling around the mountain wilderness. Not climbing, just being there.

Now I couldn't believe the mountain light he was showing me. Seeing his subtle tones and clear light was a

Opposite page, Top: The Del Oro Theater booth in Grass Valley, California. Bottom: The artist relaxes in a favorite spot.

Above: A Clevenger photo features the true Sierra light.

Lee Vining Canyon

"The Arts" is a cooperative effort of Sierra Life Magazine and the Inyo Council for the Arts.

Vern and wife Margaret check the view from atop El Capitan.

sudden relief. Relief from a pressure I couldn't have voiced then, a pressure I hadn't even realized was being exerted on my senses by the Kodachrome hammerlock.

Truth in lighting. One shot, for example, looks slightly downward onto an alpine landscape filled to the middle distance with boulders. Vern resisted the temptation to shift vantage until one edge etched against alpine sky. He further resisted polarizing to indigo the sky that he wasn't going to show. There is a subtle orange light bathing the nearly monotonous boulderfield. It is the alpenglow of a regular Sierra sunset, not a Kodachrome-enhanced blockbuster. The delicacy of the color is restful, putting your mood into the harmony of the children's hour. Only then do you suddenly notice, blended into a sandy alpine nook, a figure. Man happily in proportion to the magnitude of alpine landscape—actually Vern's wife Margaret.

Vern's secret is control, control of the entire process of making a photograph from beginning to end. He starts with Vericolor L film, bringing 4x5 inch negatives out of his big view camera. "So much for traveling light," Vern shrugs, "camera, tripod and lenses are about 35 pounds." He's been known to carry that outfit on top of his regular backpacking gear for weeks at a time. Control continues into the darkroom for painstaking hand printing. Over and over he dives back into the dark, unsatisfied. I walked into his living room one morning to find fresh prints on the couch. I was admiring them when Vern burst out of the darkroom. "No, no, too red—see?" I hadn't; big doses of Kodachrome had turned my brain to mush.

Recently Vern has been branching out from the alpine, and not just to high desert sandscapes and big New Mexico skylines battered by purple rain. Now there's the matter of illuminated facets of the Scottsdale Art Museum, bathed in ever-lighter shades of the palest blue, or brash neon outlining the graceful deco curves of a rural movie theater.

I want them all on my walls, but I have a feeling I'd better hurry. Knowledgeable collectors are fast buying up these finely matted and framed limited edition 16 by 20 prints, while they're still going for only $100 to $125. Oddly enough, Vern is developing quite a following in New York City, while at home on the West Coast he is still largely unknown. Meanwhile he is thinking bigger. A very few of the images are now available in nearly overwhelming 23 by 30 format. I recall a fall shot into aspens that struck me like a laser-printed version of what those mural wallpaper jobs try so pitifully to evoke. The image is like a window opening onto the mountains with crisp autumn air.

It's wonderful to see in Vern Clevenger's work a fuller range of the delicate light blazing out of the mountains around us. □

When he's not lecturing or teaching climbing across the country, Doug Robinson comes home to Bishop to guide in his favorite mountains and to write. He is currently working on a book about adrenaline which he says will explain why men climb mountains.

GREEN
MOTORS

CHEVROLET

ANY FULL SIZE
CHEVROLET TRUCK

$99.

OVER INVOICE
462 N. MAIN ST.
BISHOP CA. 93514
(619) 873-3515

Bomber Hat
by
ADVENTURE16

GORE-TEX fabrics
Borglite Pile

Keep your head, neck and ears toasty warm with this classic **Bomber Hat**—already an Everest veteran. Made with a unique combination of Gore-Tex and Borglite Pile. When the north wind blows, snug down the earflaps under the chin.

Ship Today Postage Paid! Specify Size and Color.
☐Sm 5¾—6½ ☐Med 6⅝—7 ☐Large 7⅛—7⅝.
Colors: ☐ Red, ☐ Royal, ☐ Navy, ☐ Tan, ☐ Gray.

I know that if I don't love it you're going to buy it back at full price. ENJOY! ☐Please send your free catalog full of other great A16 products.

Payment: Check☐ Mastercard☐ Visa☐
California residents add 6% sales tax.
Card #_____ Exp. Date_____
Name_____
Address_____
City_____ State_____ Zip_____
Adventure 16, 4620 Alvarado Canyon Rd.
San Diego, CA 92120 (619) 283-2374

Would you like to complete your collection of Sierra Life?

We have a limited number of back issues available at $3.00 each.

NOVEMBER 1981
DECEMBER 1981
APRIL 1982
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1983
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1984
JULY/AUGUST 1984
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1985
JULY/AUGUST 1985

Circle the issues you would like and allow 3 weeks for delivery.

Don't miss a minute of the beautiful High Sierra!
SUBSCRIBE TODAY TO SIERRA LIFE
The Magazine of the High Sierra

NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ **ZIP** _____

Sierra Life is published bi-monthly.
$14.00 per year or six issues
Send check or money order to:
SIERRA LIFE MAGAZINE
699 West Line Street
Bishop, CA 93514

☐ Back Issues ☐ New Subscription

From the Publisher

On October 25th, I decided a much needed vacation was in order. I looked through all the travel brochures and decided I couldn't afford a month on a tropical island — so, I took the next best thing . . . viral pneumonia.

It was great — five weeks in bed for just the cost of a prescription and a few lab tests. It was better than going off to one of those exclusive "fat farms." I lost sixteen pounds!

I *knew* the staff couldn't possibly get along without me so along with not eating or breathing, I worried.

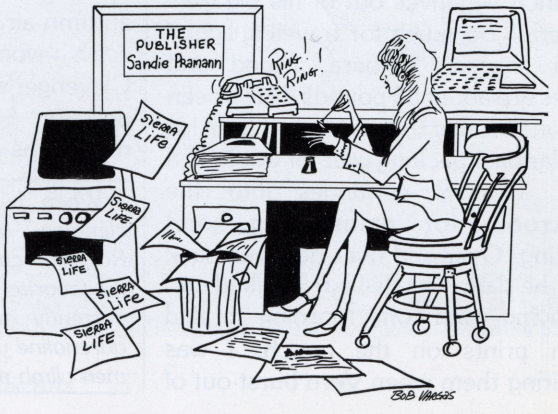
Friends stopped by and left books on reincarnation, my doctor came by every few days to ask me if I wanted to die at home or in the hospital, the staff called to tell me not to worry — all I could do was whisper feebly into the phone, "the magazine, the magazine," since I had lost my voice.

I should have known better than to worry. The staff did just fine without me. They took over completely and, as you can see, produced a beautiful issue of Sierra Life. Thank you Marty, Janice, Earl and Mike!

Once I got the locksmith over to let me in the office — apparently the staff had the locks changed — I noticed that some strange things had happened while I was gone. Herman, the office mouse, took a wife and had a family, someone changed the prescription to my reading glasses, someone cleaned off my desk but left all my old diet Coke cans, the copy machine disappeared (it didn't work anyway, but I am curious as to its whereabouts), and I keep finding cartoons about the "boss" around. The only "printable" one came from Bob Vargas of Westminster, California (below). I'm really not doing my nails — a typo got on my finger and I'm "whiting it out." Thank you Bob, I always did want to be a "Vargas girl."

Next time, I think I'll take a less exotic vacation. I'll settle for anything that doesn't begin with the letter "P" or use the Athens airport.

Sandie Pramann
Publisher



Snow forms on Buena Vista Crest, Yosemite, California.

Vern Clevenger photo

A MAMMOTH VACATION
WINTER SPECIALS
3, 4, & 5 Day Packages from $137.00 per person/double occupancy. Includes lifts, lodging & taxes.
Experience a Mammoth Summer!
Take advantage of our summer packages & super savings.
For information or reservations, call: 1-800-228-4947 from So. Cal., or 619 934-2581
MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN INN